

# ALL AMONG THE LOGGERS



CLARENCE B. BURLEIGH





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VEDE PELOTTE AND HIS TOTE-TEAM. — Page 76.





















“THROWUM UP HANDS!” COMMANDED A DEEP, GUTTURAL VOICE.  
*Page 354.*



NORMAN CARVER SERIES

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# ALL AMONG THE LOGGERS

OR

Norman Carver's Winter in  
a Lumber Camp

BY

C. B. BURLEIGH

AUTHOR OF "THE CAMP ON LETTER K," "RAYMOND BENSON AT  
KRAMPTON," "THE KENTON PINES"

*ILLUSTRATED BY H. C. EDWARDS*



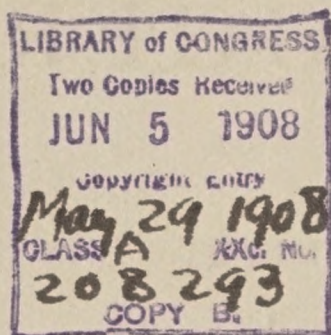
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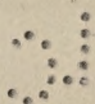
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ALL AMONG THE LOGGERS



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TO

**Hon. William M. Sewall**

BETTER KNOWN AS "BILL," SEWALL, WHOSE COMPANIONSHIP  
ON A MEMORABLE MIDWINTER VISIT TO SOME TYPICAL  
MAINE LOGGING-CAMPS WILL ALWAYS BE AMONG  
THE PLEASANTEST MEMORIES OF MY LIFE,  
THIS BOOK IS CORDIALLY DEDICATED







## PREFACE

Every industrial army whose work for civilization calls for the qualities of hardihood and endurance, numbers its nameless heroes. We are all prone, in the enjoyment of the fruits of human toil and effort, to consider only the accomplished results, and to give little, if any, thought to the men and methods employed in their attainment. Some of the callings most hazardous to those engaged in them contribute the most directly to the home and its comforts. This is especially true of the logging industry. Comparatively little is known by the world at large of the dangers encountered and the hardships endured by the sturdy men who, amid the drifting snows, the cold winds, and the icy storms of the northern winter, brave the vast solitudes of the Maine wilderness; who lay low the mighty giants of the forest, and convert them into "sawlogs"; who drive these logs on the full flood of the spring freshets to the sawmills whose relentless rotaries speedily transform this "raw-material" of the forest into the long and short lumber of commerce.

In this work of furnishing material for homebuilding, Maine, with her 22,800 square miles of wilderness, has long borne a conspicuous part; and yet one has only to consult the libraries to find how scant is the literature of the Maine logging-camps, with their hardy crews and



picturesque surroundings. It was for the purpose of presenting something of the typical life and atmosphere of these camps that the following pages were written. In their preparation, terms and expressions peculiar to the camps have been employed precisely as they are used among Maine woodsmen.

An effort has been made to render this presentation of logging-camp life and methods, as they exist to-day in the northern-Maine woods more attractive to young readers by embodying it in a narrative, which, it is hoped, will be found sufficiently exciting to arouse their interest and hold their attention.

Grateful acknowledgments are due Hon. Edgar E. Ring, State Land Agent of Maine, a gentleman with a personal experience of twenty-two years in practical logging operations, for his kindness in going over this volume in the manuscript; also to Hon. William W. Sewall, better known as "Bill" Sewall, and to my friend and classmate Austin Cary, Assistant Professor of Forestry at Harvard University, for valuable facts and suggestions embodied in its pages.

If the book is successful in bringing home to the minds of its readers some conception of the conditions existing among the brave and hardy men who fight the battles of the great Maine wilderness, in the primary work of converting its vast resources to the uses of civilization, the writer will feel that his labors have not been wholly in vain.

C. B. BURLEIGH.

AUGUSTA, MAINE.



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## CHAPTER I

### AN ESCAPADE AND WHAT CAME OF IT

“This condition of affairs — your very evident disposition to look upon life as a perpetual holiday without serious aim or purpose — can continue no longer. I am conscious — painfully conscious — of my own fault in having permitted it as long as I have; but this must be the end of it.”

General Carver spoke sternly; and his son Norman, a handsome boy of seventeen, with bright black eyes and straight, athletic figure, who was alone with him in the Sunday seclusion of the family library, and to whom the above remarks were addressed, was plainly depressed and disconcerted by his father's displeasure.

“We only did it for fun,” he said, humbly. “None of the fellows supposed for a moment that it would kick up such a row.”

“You did it for fun!” repeated the General, scornfully; “and you call deliberate thievery, fun!”

He paused abruptly, and walked up and down the room in very evident perturbation of spirit.

“The men of our family have been of practical mould — too little given, I fear, to sentiment,” he said presently, pausing in front of his son; “but we have



guarded most jealously our family reputation for integrity. It has been the basis of any success we have achieved, and a heritage in which we have felt a just pride. You were too young when your mother died to realize the magnitude of your loss — and I, alas! was little fitted to take her place in your life; still I hoped for the best. I know now, in the light of your humiliating confession, that it would have been vastly better if I had accumulated fewer dollars for you, and entered a little more closely into your life.”

“ I’m mighty sorry I got into such a scrape, father — I am, truly; but you see the members of the Jol Bro are expected to do something to show their nerve. A fellow would be looked upon as a cad and a coward if he didn’t prove his mettle. Besides, we only meant it for a lark.”

“ I confess, Norman, that I am not able to appreciate your point of view,” said the General, coldly. “ You and your associates deliberately break and enter a private house — a state-prison offense — in order to steal a coat of mail with which to decorate the statue of the honored founder of your school. This you call an exhibition of nerve, a proof of mettle, disregarding the disgust and censure of decent people, and feeling amply repaid by the careless laughter of an unthinking public, and the disreputable applause of cheap cronies, who were not above commending the vandalism in which they were too cowardly to participate.”

“ I’ve admitted my mistake, and expressed my regret



for it. What more can I do?" interposed Norman, who had grown very red in the face, and looked exceedingly uncomfortable under his father's censure.

"I wish I could believe it entirely genuine," returned the General, in a skeptical tone; "but I am very much afraid that your sorrow is more for your ill luck in being found out, and featured in the newspapers, than the result of any genuine repentance for the crime you've committed. You must remember that you are still a prisoner in the sight of the law. I confess that I never dreamed the day would come, Norman, when I should have to go bail for you in a police court."

"You wouldn't, either, if it hadn't been for that sneaking Sime Paddock," said Norman, bitterly.

"In almost every crowd vicious enough to engage in such disreputable affairs, there's usually one mean enough to try to save himself at the expense of his — er — pals," declared the General, in a tone of conviction. "I agree with you that this fellow Paddock is a most contemptible young jackanapes; still the fact remains that for some time past — up to the very moment, in fact, when he gave you and other prominent members of your society that you call the Jol Bro an unexpected and unsavory notoriety by turning State's evidence — he was one of your boon companions, a hail fellow, well met, with you."

"I never dreamed he was such a sneak," said Norman, bitterly.

"I'm glad to hear it," said the General, with a note



of approval in his voice. "It would have been much better for you, however, if you had been wise enough to have broken with him earlier in your acquaintance."

"I know it now; but I supposed he was a white — a decent fellow."

"But you've seen your mistake?"

"Yes."

"What way would you suggest of meeting this situation, Norman?"

"Why — I — thought you knew Judge Meade, and might get him to let me off, inasmuch as it's a — a first offense."

"I've seen him, my son, and asked him to do that very thing."

"You did? When?"

"This forenoon."

"Wha — what did he say?"

Norman endeavored to appear unconcerned, but it was impossible for him successfully to conceal his anxiety.

"The interview was not altogether satisfactory," said the General, regretfully. "I think he felt for me in my humiliation. Certainly he was very courteous. He insisted, however, that all the boys concerned in the break at the Horton house should be arraigned in open court to-morrow morning. After he has heard the evidence, he will decide whether to mete out punishment himself or bind you over for trial at the next term of the Superior Court."



"I don't see what more he expects to find out," declared Norman, in a tone of disappointment. "Sime Paddock has told him everything."

"If that's the case, the rest of you may tell the truth without incurring the stigma of being informers. I will go with you to-morrow. I shall hope for the best; but we need not be surprised if the court deals with you summarily. Sometimes, since this matter came up, I have felt that it was fortunate for you —"

The General paused abruptly, alarmed by the pallor on his son's face. "Are you ill?" he asked, hastily, with unmistakable anxiety in his voice.

"No — but why don't you say it?"

"Say what?"

"That you are glad mother didn't live to see this day. I know I did wrong, father," he added, hurriedly, without giving his father a chance to reply, "but I acted hastily — in a spirit of fun, and I didn't think how seriously people would look upon it. Don't, I beg of you, think me wholly bad because I've made one break."

General Carver stepped to his son's side, and laid a kindly hand upon his shoulder.

"You must know, Norman, that you are dearer to me than anything else on earth," he said, in a softer tone. "I have been proud of the fact that you have been truthful, temperate, and honest. Those are Carver traits. I expected them in you — still it is none the less gratifying to me that you possess them. At



the same time many of your associates have been far from my liking. They are not boys who appear to have any very serious or definite purpose in life, and it seems to me that the more you are thrown in their company the harder it will become for you to say 'No.' Ah! that is a very small word, my boy, but the ability to say it is a declaration of spiritual independence. It is an anchor for the soul, an unmistakable badge of character."

"But I've been able to say it, father," began Norman. "I —" he paused abruptly; "except in this last matter," he added, gloomily.

"And that I hope may not become an entering wedge," said the General, earnestly.

"It shall not," declared Norman, with decision.

"I've felt, Norman, that you have had too much leisure at your disposal. It is an old but true saying that Satan finds work for idle hands to do. I've noticed, too, on your part, an almost morbid sensitiveness to the ridicule of your companions. It is a bad thing for a boy when he is afraid to do what is manly and right for fear the 'fellows' will laugh at him. Brave boys must have the courage of their convictions — the courage to do right because it *is* right, and without reference to what the 'fellows' may say."

"I haven't been altogether a follower among the boys, father," protested Norman.

"I know that," admitted the General. "You have always been more or less of a leader, but one whose



influence I fear hasn't always been exerted for the worthiest ideals. You have had too many idle hours, and too much unearned money to spend. When I was your age I was on a farm. I got up at four o'clock in the morning and helped milk and do the chores. Then I walked five miles to the village to attend the Academy there, and back home again at night. When I got a dollar I had to earn it by hard work. That made me more or less careful how I parted with it. I doubt if you have ever given a thought to matters of this kind." The General was suddenly silent, and Norman, seeing that his father was absorbed in thought, forebore to interrupt him. Presently, with a sigh, the tall veteran aroused himself from his reverie. "They say that it is only three generations from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves in America," he said, "and I have often thought that it was no kindness to try to smooth out all the rough places in life for a boy, or to furnish him with money to spend of whose value he must have, at best, a very inadequate conception."

"You have used me far better than I deserved, father," admitted Norman.

"I'm not altogether sure that I have, my boy. Foolish indulgence may be only another name for positive injury. I have felt, of late, that it might have been better for both of us if I had given you more of my time, entered a little more into your plans, and been more of a boy with you."

"It isn't too late now," suggested Norman.



"It is for the present at least," returned the General. "I have other plans for you."

Norman was visibly startled by this announcement.

"Other plans — what — what do you mean?" he asked, trying vainly to conceal his anxiety.

"I mean that I have made arrangements for you to go to work," explained his father. "I am, as you know, interested to some extent in the stock of the Lakeland Lumber Company, in northern Maine. The manager, Henry Ordway of Bangor, is an old personal friend of mine. We were seatmates years ago at the old Bolton Academy. I have written him concerning you, and arranged for you to go into one of the company's camps this winter as clerk. It will be a new experience for you; but I believe that it will be a valuable one. You will at least be free from present associations, and will enjoy the novel sensation of earning your own living."

"But a lumber-camp, father!" protested Norman. "Are the associations there so much better than those of Boston?"

"I think so — in your case," rejoined the General, briefly. "I have worked, and worked hard, in a logging-camp in my younger days. I know the coarse features of the life among woodsmen. I know the temptations that are there, gross to a degree, but not, I think, of a character to appeal to you. You will have many influences in this primitive life that will tend to strengthen you. You will be close to the great heart



of Nature, in an atmosphere of work — the hard, persistent, incessant toil of the strong, sturdy men who convert the vast resources of the forests to the uses of civilization. It will not be play for you; but, nevertheless, I feel that the experiences of such a winter will be most valuable to you."

"But, father!" expostulated Norman, aghast at the prospect, "I would have to leave school — besides — I — I haven't any outfit."

The faint suggestion of a smile played for a moment about the corners of General Carver's mouth.

"I think the school you will be in will be — for a while at least — a better one than that you have been attending. The school of practical experience has graduated some of our best scholars, and most successful men. As for your outfit, I have written Mr. Ordway to provide one for you. He will have it all ready when you reach Bangor."

"When will that be?"

"I'm not sure. It will depend upon the action of the court to-morrow morning. If the judge is lenient, I hope to get you away the next day — Tuesday morning. That will bring you into Bangor the same evening. You will stay over night with Mr. Ordway, and go into the woods over the Bangor & Aroostook Railroad the next morning. Nate Collins, a leading farmer and one of the best-known guides in that section, is scaling for the company; and Mr. Ordway will arrange for him to show you into the camps. He is an old



friend of mine, a clear-headed, intelligent, upright man who has spent much time hunting and lumbering in the northern woods. Association with such a man will be, in itself, an education for you."

It was evident that Norman was becoming interested in his father's plan, distasteful as it had appeared to him when it was first broached.

"Of course I shall be glad to go with him," he said; "but my work — how shall I know what to do? It isn't likely I could make myself very useful when I never even saw a lumber-camp," he added, with an appalling sense of his own inefficiency.

"You will have good instruction," returned his father, cheerfully, "and will not be asked to do anything that any bright boy of your age, and with your education, could not easily do, if he paid reasonable attention to business. While it occurs to me, I want to say that a clerk must make himself very generally useful. He mustn't stand upon the dignity of his position, but must be ready at any time to do an errand or lend a helping hand wherever he can be of service."

"I should want to do that anyway," said Norman.

Later in the evening he sat in the family pew with his father at the Sunday evening exercises in the church which they attended, but his mind was not upon the sermon. Instead it wandered away to the far-off Aroostook in a vain attempt to conjure up a mental picture of the vast northern forests which a great army of men was even then converting into sawlogs.



Norman had never been accustomed to question his father's decisions; and while the General's announcement of his purpose to send him into a logging-camp had come to him as a decided surprise, and with something of a shock, still the more he reflected upon it, the more favorably impressed he was with the idea. The unexpected and unsavory denouement that had followed the raid of the Jol Bro committee upon the archaic collection, that had long been the pride of the wealthy and eccentric owner of the Horton house, had been the source of no little humiliation to the proud spirit of Norman Carver. The newspaper notoriety which the affair had attained, and the caustic criticisms it called forth, had made him sick at heart. At first the escapade had seemed to him peculiarly rich in the qualities of a rare and racy humor. Now his face flushed with shame at the mere thought of it, and he could only wonder that he had ever been weak enough to engage in such an egregious piece of folly. He dreaded the ordeal of the police court, and was, on the whole, glad of the opportunity to drop quietly out of sight, until the whole deplorable affair should pass out of the public mind.

Late that night, as he lay in his bed turning over in his mind the surprising developments of the afternoon, and wondering what life in the big Maine forests might have in store for him, the door opened softly and his father stepped into the room.

"Are you awake, my son?" he asked, and Norman



thought he detected a new note of tenderness and yearning in his voice. He felt in that moment a new appreciation of the strength and tenderness of his father's love for him. In a flash he saw how great was the personal sacrifice this gray-haired veteran was making in sending him, even temporarily, out of his lonely life. Something swelled up in his throat and choked him, as he answered, huskily:

"Yes, sir."

"Well, don't worry, my boy; and you needn't feel obliged to get up in the morning until you are ready. I will meet you at the police court at ten o'clock. Good night."

"Good night," responded Norman, and shortly after he fell fast asleep, in the midst of newly formed resolutions to win his father's approbation, as well as merit his love.



## CHAPTER II

### A FORENOON IN THE POLICE COURT

“That’s right, crawl! slink away, you sneak!”

There was something so scathing in Norman Carver’s tones that Simon Paddock, who was endeavoring to avoid him by hurrying down a cross street, stopped abruptly and faced him with flaming cheeks. He was a tall, stooped-shouldered fellow, with sharp, hatchet-like face, and small, furtive eyes, that darted quick, uneasy glances, but were, apparently, incapable of fairly meeting a direct gaze.

“Who are you calling a sneak?” he demanded, angrily.

“You,” returned Norman Carver, emphatically. “You were the only one in our crowd who was mean enough to give the fellows away, and you know you were in it just as deeply as any of us. It was a cowardly, contemptible act — and don’t you think the fellows haven’t got it in for you. I see your finish.”

“You mustn’t be too hard on a fellow,” whined Simon, apprehensive of the punishment which his former associates might visit upon him for his treachery. “I didn’t want to do it — truly I didn’t; but you know we went too far. We did, really, and -



well, you know what an awful smell the thing kicked up, and of course — really — you see, I — I didn't want to go to State prison, you know."

"But you were quite willing to send the rest of us there," rejoined Norman, bitterly. "You are certainly a most generous and loyal friend — but don't you worry, you'll get your reward. The fellows have got it in pickle for you."

Simon's naturally sallow countenance grew a shade paler at this menacing announcement.

"I didn't want to say a word about it — hope to die if I did," he protested, nervously; "but I simply had to. The old man made me."

"The old man? Who, Doctor Horton?" asked Norman, in an incredulous tone.

"No; dad. He got a line on the whole matter and I had to own up. Then he made me tell the whole story to the District Attorney."

"Go tell that to the marines," said Norman, coldly. "You can't work us with any hot air. We know all about it. You crawfished. You crawled. You did anything and everything to save yourself. The only thing the fellows wonder at now is that they ever admitted such a lightweight as you to the Jol Bro."

"You needn't preach, Carver," rejoined Simon, sullenly. "I don't care a rap for the Jol Bro. It's in mighty bad odor just now. No decent fellow would want his name connected with it. It's true I didn't want to tell what I did — I didn't, really; but you



know mighty well that any one of the rest of you would have done just as I did if you'd had my chance to break clear of the scrape."

Norman bent forward with blazing eyes, and shook his fist in Simon's face with a vigor that made that worthy draw back in genuine alarm.

"You coward! You cringing cur!" Norman's voice was hoarse with anger, and his hand shook with the intensity of his passion. "You judge other people by yourself; but there, every one knows that there isn't another such a sneak as you within a ten-mile radius. Even the people that condemned us on the strength of your confession despised you for it. There isn't a decent fellow in the city to-day that would have anything to do with you."

"Indeed!" sneered Simon, finally stung to resentment by Norman's scornful denunciation. "I trust you don't include yourself in that class. Decent fellows don't have engagements at the police court."

"I admire your crust! You, who have added treachery to the original offense, reproaching us for the police court opened to us by your own cowardly betrayal! You have neither manhood nor decency. Those of us who will suffer by your skulking exposure have made a bad mistake, and done a mighty foolish thing; but we haven't been chicken-hearted enough to go into a white funk."

"It's refreshing to know that you have at least seen the error of your ways," sneered Simon, who was evi-



dently smarting under Norman's vigorously expressed contempt. "I thought you labored under the delusion that 'the King could do no wrong.'"

"We knew very well our shortcomings; but you were the only one of the crowd to turn jackal," returned Norman, warmly. "Moreover," he added, "you were the only one in the crowd whom I ever heard refer to his father as the 'old man,' and any fellow who is guilty of such disrespect is rotten to the core."

With this parting shot Norman was turning away in disgust, when a stinging blow caught him side of the face, and sent him reeling against a lamp-post.

"So I'm rotten, am I?" demanded Simon, wrathfully, in a thin, nasal tone that rose almost to a shriek. It was evident that he had been spurred to unexpected aggressiveness by a sudden gust of passion. "You — you conceited windbag! Who made you Czar? How long have you been running things in this city? I just want you to know I don't wear your collar. I —"

Whatever Simon was about to add was lost in a yell of pain and terror. Norman had recovered from the daze of his unexpected assault; and, springing quickly forward, gave Simon a swinging blow behind the ear, that sent him sprawling into the gutter, from which he scrambled, a moment later, looking decidedly the worse for his experience. Norman expected him to renew the attack; but, to his surprise, Simon made off down a near-by alley as fast as he could go.



"Look out for de cop!" yelled a little bootblack from the opposite side of the street; but the warning came too late. A heavy hand was laid on Norman's shoulder; and, turning in dismay, he found himself in the grasp of a burly policeman.

"An' sure the public strates are not the place to do yer scrappin' stunts in, me little bantam," said the big officer, good-naturedly. "Ye'd betther hire a hall."

"I know that," returned Norman, hotly, "but — but he hit me first."

"Thot's what he did — the spalpeen!" admitted the officer. "Oi saw the whole bout. Oi was in hopes Pat Callahan moight have got his dooflappers on him; but, bedad, he was too shifty for me."

By this time a crowd of grinning street gamins and curious pedestrians were following in their wake, and Norman felt keenly the disgrace of his position. He knew that his father had hoped to secure some clemency from the court in settling the case of the Jol Bro committee, and the thought of the disastrous effect which this fresh trouble might have, not merely upon his own fortunes but, possibly, upon those of his associates, filled him with anxiety and dread.

"Arrah! Cheer up wid ye. Sure an' we all have our troubles," said the big officer, with a bluff attempt at consolation, noting the long face which his prisoner wore. "Move on wid ye! an' don't be loafin' around here, or Oi'll be afther runnin' some o' ye in," he added, angrily, shaking his club at the spectators.



The crowd shrank away; and, opening a street door at his left, the big policeman entered with Norman, and closed it behind him.

“Now let thim gawp, bad cess to thim!” he growled.

It was a small room, something like an office, that afforded them a refuge; and it was evident that the officer was more or less familiar with it. Passing to the rear of it, he entered a back room, which Norman saw with surprise was evidently the storeroom and finishing-shop of a small undertaking-establishment. Pausing at the rear end of this room, the big officer took a seat near the window.

“Me brither runs this little place, and Oi sometimes run in here a minute whin Oi want to hear mesilf think,” he said, whimsically. “Sit down wid ye,” he added, pointing to a chair near him.

Norman took the indicated seat, wondering what the next move would be. He was encouraged to believe that his burly captor was not lacking in sympathy for him.

“Sure, an’ Oi must con your case over a bit — Oi must thot,” declared the big policeman, solemnly. “It’s ivident,” he continued, judicially, “that the bloody spalpeen hot ye the firrst swat — he did thot. Arrah! it was a dirthy thrick, an’ it’s not Pat Callahan as would be blamin’ ye fur cuffin’ him back. Begorra, ony dacint bhoy wud ’a’ been afther doin’ the same. Sure,” he added, in a tone of conviction, “it was ividintly widout quistion a matther av silf-definse. Oi shall have, in



the inthrists of law and ordther, to think the matther over wid great care. Manewhoile, there's a back door forninst ye there thot lades into a back alley. If ye should tack a notion to fade away in thot diriction, it's not loikely Oi'd be afther sayin' ye."

Norman needed no second hint, and a moment later was speeding down the alley in the direction of the police court, where he found his father, together with a sorry-looking group of members of the Jol Bro anxiously awaiting him. Back in the last row of seats reserved for the witnesses sat Simon Paddock, looking decidedly the worse for his recent encounter with Norman, and shrinking visibly under the contemptuous glances of his former associates.

For several reasons the members of the Jol Bro had been spared the humiliation of the prisoners' dock, and were seated near the swinging doors at the entrance to the court room, upon one of the seats usually reserved for the spectators.

In one corner of the room, to the left of the judges' bench, facing the boys, was an enclosed place, known as the "pen," in which prisoners were detained while awaiting trial. This was carried nearly to the height of a man, in the matched sheathing, and was still further extended by a heavy wire lattice which ran along the top. The front of the pen was cut away, where it faced the raised platform, upon which the judges sat, to form a "bar," before which the prisoners stood as they were called up in turn for trial. Prisoners were



brought into the pen through a door in the rear. There was also a door in the front of the enclosure which opened into the court room, and which was used by the court officers and attorneys. Through this door also passed the prisoners whom the court discharged, or permitted to go on probation.

To Norman, the pen was a special center of interest. From his seat he was able to see the motley collection of prisoners as they were brought into it by way of the rear door. They were a decidedly unkempt and disreputable-looking lot. He mentally thanked his lucky stars that he and his companions had escaped the humiliation of mingling with them.

As he watched, an officer brought two prisoners into the pen for the purpose of having them bound over for trial at the next term of the Superior Court. From the newspaper portraits of them which had been published in the leading journals, Norman recognized them as "Baggy" Snell and "Clouter" Kelty, two well-known burglars of brutal type, who had been captured red-handed in the robbery of a suburban bank. Both had "done time," and both, strange to say, were known as "model prisoners," a fact which had apparently made the officers somewhat careless in dealing with them; for Norman noted, with surprise, that neither of them was ironed. "Baggy" was an inoffensive-looking fellow, somewhat undersized, whose bow-legs suggested the origin of the name by which he was known, and whose mild and deprecatory manner made



it difficult to believe that he was indeed the skilful and daring cracksman he was known to be. "Clouter" Kelty, on the other hand, was a typical tough. He was a thick-set, bullet-headed, dark-eyed man, with a bulldog squareness of jaw, and an insolent face—a countenance at once indicative of great daring, craft, and cruelty. His dark hair, long and coarse, fell in a heavy tangle about his forehead. It failed, however, fully to conceal a livid, red scar, which extended obliquely into the scalp from just above the right eye. A bristly growth of beard covered his face. He was a repulsive-looking fellow, and one well calculated to inspire distrust in all who met him.

Not only was Kelty known to be guilty of the crime in the act of which he had been captured, but he was also thought to have committed a brutal assault upon an old man, who even then was lying in one of the city hospitals in a precarious condition.

Quite a number of prisoners were already in the pen when Kelty and Snell were brought into it, and, as a result, they were given a seat near the first row and almost in front of the door opening into the court room. Having thus disposed of them, the officer who had escorted them thither took his departure from the pen through the doorway opening into it at the rear.

In front of the door which opened from the pen into the court room, was an officer whose special duty appeared to be the maintenance of order and decorum on the part of prisoners and spectators. The presiding



judge was busily engaged in looking over the various papers submitted to him by a number of citizens and police officers, lined up in single file before the bench, and each awaiting his turn to secure an audience with the court.

Presently the officer, who was stationed at the door of the pen, stepped over in front of the bench and engaged in a conference with the clerk of the court. A number of young attorneys came and went from the pen for the evident purpose of holding consultations with their clients. As one of these came out from the enclosure he was closely followed by a thick-set, powerfully built man, who gave a cool, nonchalant glance about the court room, and started leisurely down the aisle toward the swinging doors that opened into the outer corridor. With a gasp of amazement Norman recognized the bullet-head and small, roving eyes of Clouter Kelty! Never before had it been his fortune to witness such an astounding exhibition of cool nerve and daring. The escaped prisoner had nearly reached the outer doors when the officer, who guarded the pen, turned from his conference with the clerk and caught sight of him.

"Hi there! Hold on! Stop him!" he cried, in tones of consternation.

Norman, who sat next to the aisle, made a quick jump and grasped the escaping desperado by the lapel of his coat; but, with a swinging blow, Kelty brushed him to the floor, and sprang through the exit. A group of officers, who hastened after him, were blocked



temporarily by a large, stout man who was about to enter the court room. When they finally reached the corridor Kelty was nowhere in sight. Several astonished bystanders who had seen him pass stated that he had fled down the long corridor like a whirlwind; and that, turning to the right at its farther end, he had raced up a short flight of stairs, and into a back street through a rear exit from the court-house. When the officers succeeded in gleaning these facts, Kelty was nowhere in sight, and a most rigid search of that section of the city failed to reveal his hiding-place to the chagrined and astonished guardians of the peace.

The daring escape of this noted criminal was, in a way, an advantage to the Jol Bro members; for it furnished the newspaper reporters with a sensation in the presence of which all minor matters were lost sight of. When the Jol Bros were finally called before the court there was not a representative of the press in the room — all of them having joined in the search for the missing Kelty.

In a few words the District Attorney stated the case against the boys, which statements he asserted, with a glance at Simon Paddock, he was prepared to substantiate in testimony. He added that Doctor Horton was not disposed to push the matter, believing that the young men had acted in a spirit of pure mischief, without vicious intent, and without appreciating the magnitude of their offense. He was prepared to leave the matter of binding them over to await the action of the



Superior Court entirely to the discretion of the presiding Judge. If His Honor felt that the notoriety they had suffered was sufficient punishment for this first offense, and should be disposed to let them go upon probation, he would offer no objection.

General Carver, who by common consent acted as counsel for the Jol Bros, then addressed the court. He said that his clients would plead guilty to the charges preferred by the District Attorney, and would throw themselves upon the mercy of the court.

The presiding Judge then stated that, after due reflection, he had decided to let the young men go upon probation, inasmuch as it was their first offense. At the same time he improved the opportunity to read them a very sharp lecture on the character of their misdemeanor.

As they were about to leave the court room, following the Judge's remarks, a well-known attorney, who sat with Simon Paddock and his father, rose and addressed the court, asking that Norman Carver be placed under arrest for aggravated assault upon his client. His Honor, after a brief conference with his colleague, granted the request, and upon the earnest solicitation of General Carver, following a hurried, whispered consultation with his son, decided to give the matter an immediate hearing.

Simon Paddock then took the stand, and, with an air of perfect candor, told a very smooth-sounding story. He said that Norman had met him on his way



to court and had reproached him for "going back" on the boys and exposing their complicity in the Horton house outrage. Young Carver, he asserted, had then demanded that he leave the city at once, and thus deprive the court of his testimony. Upon his indignant refusal to do this he declared that Norman knocked him down and brutally kicked him.

Norman Carver was then put upon the stand and told the story of the encounter precisely as it had occurred — flatly contradicting the greater part of Simon's testimony.

It was evident that Judge Meade was very much perplexed at the situation. Both boys had told apparently truthful and straightforward stories. While there was a motive for Norman to commit the assault with which he had been charged, at the same time, the treacherous part which Simon had played towards his former associates had not prepossessed the hard-headed old lawyer in his favor.

"Is there any further testimony?" he asked.

At that moment Norman caught sight of the round, good-natured face of the officer who had arrested him, and who had just entered the court room.

"I'll ask Your Honor to call the police officer in the rear of the room," he said.

"Officer Callahan will please step forward and be sworn," said the Judge. "Now what can you tell me about the trouble between these boys?" he asked, when the big fellow had taken his place on the witness-stand.



“ Oi saw thim, Your Honor, a-holdin’ a confab this forenoon about midway of me bate. Oi judged they were not on frindly terms. Finally this wan ” — pointing at Norman — “ stharterd to go. Upon thot the other wan ” — pointing at Simon — “ fetched him a most dirthy blow from behoind.”

“ Let me understand you clearly, officer,” interposed the Judge. “ You positively state that this boy ” — nodding at Simon — “ struck the first blow? ”

“ Thot’s what he did, Your Honor, and a cowardly wan it was, too. Av course Oi took a hand thin, but not before me little mon here ” — waving his hand at Norman — “ got back on the other lad. Arrah! but ’twas a swate clip he gave him, complately upinding ’im into the gutter. About the toime he got onto his fate he saw me an’ lit out loike a gale o’ wind. This bye’s back was turned,” he added, nodding at Norman, “ so Oi pinched him; but you know, Your Honor, he is not a large bye, an’ Oi got thot busy wid me reflic-tions thot he skipped me intoirely.”

An audible titter ran about the court room, and a momentary twinkle gleamed in the Judge’s dark eyes.

“ The prisoner is discharged,” he said, as the officer left the stand. “ As for you,” he added, sternly, turning to Simon, “ it is very evident that you are a liar, in addition to your other shortcomings. I have a good mind to bind you over on a charge of perjury; but in consideration of your parents I shall let you go. If you come before me again, however, you will not get



off so easily," and the cringing Simon, who had been white with fear during Officer Callahan's testimony, lost no time in slinking out of the room.

Norman sat up with the General till nearly midnight that evening, completing the preparations for his trip to Aroostook; and, in those parting hours, the boy felt the barriers of reserve melt away, and was conscious of coming closer to the heart of his father than ever before in his life.



## CHAPTER III

### ON THE WAY TO THE WOODS

“That’s the famous Indian Island.”

The Bangor & Aroostook train was just pulling out of Old Town, and Norman Carver looked with interest at the small island in the Penobscot river which had just been pointed out to him by the friendly commercial traveler who shared his seat.

“Do Indians live there?” he asked, incredulously.

“Sure,” replied his companion, good-naturedly. “All, or practically all, that are left of the once powerful Penobscot tribe.”

“But I thought that — ”

“That they lived in wigwams?” interposed his companion, with a smile. “So they did once, but that was a good many years ago. Indians here in Maine to-day live and dress and look pretty much like other folks.”

Norman regarded with a new curiosity the little village of framed houses, many of them painted white, which covered the island nearly to the water’s edge.

“I shouldn’t think there could be many left,” he said.

“Well, there are not very many — about 386 all



told, I think. You will notice, however, that they still maintain the village life that has always been characteristic of the race. For all they are so taciturn, and seem to fit so naturally into the silence and solitude of the great forests they love so well, the Indians, in their home life, are both hospitable and social. They have there on the island a neat little chapel, and the advantages of an excellent school taught by the Sisters of Charity."

"Can they get fish and game enough to live on?" asked Norman.

"They don't try to," returned his companion. "They have various other ways of earning a living. The men take naturally to a woods life. Some of them work in the logging-crews, and many of them are skilful river-drivers. In fact, lumbering operations constitute about the only form of white men's industry that seems to appeal to Indians. They are naturally skilled in all the arts of woodcraft, are adepts in the management of canoes, and are in considerable demand, during the open season, as guides. All of them are expert basket-makers; and, with the growth of the summer resorts, they have found a very ready and a very profitable market for their wares among the city visitors."

He paused, and, taking his cigar from his mouth, regarded Norman with evident interest and curiosity. "Not familiar with Maine, I take it?" he said, in a tone of inquiry.



"No. It is my father's native State; but I have never been in it before. My home is in Boston."

"Still you are bound for the Maine woods, I reckon," he continued, with a glance at the snow-shoes by Norman's side.

"Yes, I'm going to spend the winter in one of the Lakeland Lumber Company's camps — as clerk, I believe. Father thought it would be a good experience for me."

Norman's face flushed a little at this statement; and, with a keen glance at the boy by his side, in which shone a gleam of comprehension, his companion forbore to pursue the subject further.

"Alton, Alton," called the brakeman, as the train came to a standstill at a small country station. A moment later the door of the smoking-car opened to admit a tall, powerfully built man, whose swarthy complexion and high cheek-bones proclaimed his Indian origin. He was dressed in an old, light colored felt hat, a flaming-red sweater, and greasy brown trousers tucked into heavy red leggings that reached to his knees. His feet were clad in moosehide moccasins. On his back he carried an ordinary grain-bag, swung over his shoulder by means of a piece of bed-cord tied to the top and bottom. This evidently contained his traveling-outfit, and, as Norman came to know later, was the most common receptacle used for the purpose by the men in the Maine logging-crews.

"Well, there's your Noble Red Man!" said the



commercial traveler, as the big Indian staggered up the aisle and sank heavily into a vacant seat.

"And fairly well loaded with fire-water, I should think," responded Norman.

"Oh, that's nothing — a very common failing of the race."

For a few minutes conversation lagged, though Norman had the uncomfortable feeling that his companion was studying him out of the corners of his eyes.

"Don't like tobacco smoke, I take it," said the traveling-man, presently, breaking the silence.

"I can't say that I do," confessed Norman. "I shouldn't have been in this car, only I wanted to see the woodsmen, and Mr. Ordway told me they almost always rode in the smoker."

"So they do," agreed the traveling-man. "I don't presume there is any rule of the road that forbids them to go elsewhere, but custom has so long decreed the smoking-car for logging-crews that none of them would feel at home anywhere else. Many a roistering crowd of them goes up and down this line, with the passengers on the other cars in blissful ignorance of their presence. They seem to think, however, that they own the smoker, and have a somewhat forceful way at times of making those around them conscious of their presence. It's really surprising, however, how successfully the conductors and brakemen handle them, when they get out of bounds. Well, I must leave you here. So long. Take care of yourself," he added, rising to his feet and



picking up his valise, as the train came to a stop at a station which the brakeman announced as Lagrange. He gave Norman a cordial handshake and hurried out of the car.

A moment later the train was under way again, and Norman found himself alone with his own reflections.

He had left his home in Boston the morning before, and had arrived in Bangor about half past four in the afternoon, where Mr. Ordway had met him at the station with his team. They had driven immediately to several stores, where an outfit had been purchased for Norman, which Mr. Ordway had laughingly assured him would put him "right in style" among the woodsmen.

He had passed the night at Mr. Ordway's house, and, acting upon that gentleman's advice, had decided to leave with him most of the articles of apparel he had brought from home. "If you should wear those things in the woods," said Mr. Ordway, "the chances are that you would forthwith become known as the 'Prince of Wales,' or some other royal personage, and never get on a real good footing with the men."

Norman was quick to appreciate the force of the suggestion, and had left Bangor at seven o'clock the following morning, clad in garments that would have passed inspection with the most critical woodsman.

Now that he was alone, he found himself looking at them with a renewed interest. On his head he wore a gray toque of heavy yarn, double-knit, and termi-



nating in a good sized tassel. A pair of heavy gray trousers were rolled into substantial "home-knit" leggings of the same color, that came to his knees. His feet were encased in bellows-front, oil-tanned moccasins, warranted to be "water-tight," the legs of which extended nearly half the length of his leggings. A loose inner sole, and two pairs of home-knit stockings under his leggings, insured him warm feet, even in zero-weather. His blue flannel shirt was covered by a heavy gray sweater. On the back of his seat hung a dark-brown teamster's coat of corduroy, lined with sheepskin having the wool on the outside. This was cut something after the style of a reefer extending several inches below the hips and fastening at the front with ball-and-socket snaps. The collar was of the ulster pattern, and, when turned up, extended well above his ears.

A pair of snow-shoes, which Mr. Ordway had assured him he would find indispensable, and a "take-down" hammerless shotgun also constituted a part of his outfit. His extra clothing and various other belongings were carried in a cheap, canvas-covered extension-case, which Mr. Ordway said would be known in the woods as an "extender," and would be of a type common enough in the crews to excite no unfavorable comment. Norman was well satisfied, from his observation of the woodsmen in the smoking-car, that the outfit procured for him by Mr. Ordway was entirely in harmony with the approved standards of the lumber-camps.



With this comforting thought he turned his attention for a moment to a copy of a Bangor morning paper which the traveling-man had left in the seat. As his eye wandered, somewhat listlessly, over its telegraph-columns, the head-lines of an item under a Boston date-line suddenly caught and riveted his attention. It read as follows:

STILL AT LARGE.

POLICE SEARCH IN VAIN FOR THE SLIPPERY  
"CLOUTER" KELTY.

Boston, Dec. 12.—"Clouter" Kelty, whose sensational escape from the officers yesterday afternoon will be long remembered in police circles as one of the most daring escapades of this character in criminal annals, is still at large. Thus far the police have been unable to obtain any clue to his whereabouts. They are, however, making a vigorous search, and it is believed that he will soon be in custody again. Photographs and descriptions have been mailed and wired all over the country, together with an offered reward of \$1,000 for his apprehension, and it is thought that his recapture will only be a matter of a short time. The authorities are especially anxious to secure him again from the fact that newly discovered evidence, together with admissions made to Detective Carter by his pal, known in criminal circles as "Baggy" Snell, give the strongest reasons for believing that Kelty was really the murderer of Abraham Barnstein, who was so brutally assaulted in the recent Fidelity Bank robbery, and who died at the city hospital last evening from the effects of his injuries.

"So that fellow is a murderer as well as thief," reflected Norman, as he laid aside the paper. "Well,



that isn't surprising. I think he has the most villainous and repulsive countenance I ever saw on a human being. I certainly hope they'll get him again. His bold break helped us out, though. I don't believe the reporters had a word about our matter. If they did, it evidently wasn't considered important enough to put upon the wire."

The train had now passed beyond the settlements, and was making its way at a good rate of speed through what appeared to be an interminable wilderness. Norman was impressed with the character of the train service. It was a novel sensation to ride in this wild country over a first-class road-bed on modern vestibule cars that would compare very favorably with those running in and out of Boston. The landscape was one so new and strange to Norman that he found himself watching it from the car window with a growing sense of its grandeur and fascination. Across frozen, snow-clad lakes, and through occasional stretches of low, brush-grown, burnt lands, whose blackened trunks bore mute testimony to the terrible ravages of the fire-king, he caught glimpses of highlands clad in the varying green of the living forests — the tall, dark hoods of the spruces, the brown-patched foliage of the cedars, and the brighter greens of the fir-trees creeping up the ridges to mingle with the giant beech, birch, and maples, whose tall, bare crests towered against the fitful blue of the sky in all the arrogance of primeval strength.

At times the train stopped briefly at little clearings



in the woods, where straggling houses of logs and shingled boards clustered about some busy sawmill, whose relentless rotaries tore the trunks of big forest-trees into long lumber, clapboards, laths, and shingles. Through the roofs of these houses projected a length or more of rusty stovepipe, from which poured volumes of black smoke that proclaimed the roaring fires that were necessary to make them habitable amid the frosts and cold, sweeping winds of a Maine winter. Side tracks, on which stood flat cars ready to receive for shipment the sawed lumber as fast as it was turned out, ran down to the mills. The conditions of life, and the country which inspired them, were so new to Norman that he found himself watching and speculating upon them with absorbing interest.

When the train had left Bangor it had carried but a few woodsmen; but as it went deeper into the wilderness they came aboard from the various wayside stations, until the smoker was well filled with them. Strong, well-built fellows they were, clad in the uncouth but comfortable garb of the woods, and with much of the superfluous energy and superabundance of spirit that is characteristic of school-children when freed for a time from their accustomed tasks. The car resounded with their noisy banter and shouts of laughter. Various black bottles were passed among them, and they became constantly more and more boisterous as a result of their potations.

Among the most jubilant members of the crowd was



the big Indian, who had boarded the train at Alton. Naturally silent and taciturn, after the manner of his race, his indulgence in fire-water had worked a strange perversion in his nature. He evidently found it too irksome to remain in his seat, for he presently arose and began parading up and down the aisle, loudly asserting his ability to lick any man in the crowd. Fortunately for him, in the condition he was in, the rough fellows to whom he addressed this challenge chose to regard it as a joke, and greeted his performance with uproarious laughter and boisterous jests.

“Hey, much Great Chief!”

“Big Medicine Man!”

“Loud-breathed Sol, the scalp-lifter!”

These and various other remarks were showered upon him, from different parts of the car, and with a rapidity that made it impossible for him to locate any particular offender. The suggestion of scalps seemed to imbue the parading warrior with a new thought.

“Scalps! Ugh! Me take um!” he grunted; and, suiting the action to the word, he began gathering in the hats and toques of the men about him, and continued his collection up and down the aisle, amid the hilarious shouts of his victims, until he held under his arm a goodly collection of trophies. The fun was growing fast and furious, as the men sought to dodge the Indian’s long arm, when a big brakeman put in an appearance, and forced the protesting Sol back into his seat, with a warning that if he didn’t stay there



he'd put him off the train. The captured hats were distributed to their various owners, and the brakeman was about to leave the car when the Indian rose to his feet and started down the aisle again.

A loud shout of laughter greeted this move.

"Old Sol's on the war-path again!" sang out a big woodsman. "Hoe in, big Chief! Whoop-er-up!"

The Indian was about to act upon this suggestion when the brakeman once more forced him ignominiously back into his seat.

"Look-a-here, you," he growled, wrathfully. "We've stood 'bout all this funny business we're going to. If you get out of this seat and interfere with the passengers again, I'll fire you off this train, sure as preaching."

"Ugh! Squaw boy! Can't do um," said the Indian, boastfully.

"Well, I rather think I can, and what's more, I will, if you try to get gay again," rejoined the brakeman, resolutely. He turned away and passed down the aisle; but before he reached the car door the Indian was on his feet again.

"Me wantum more scalp!" he announced, with a grin, as he started down the aisle. His career, however, was brief. The train came to a stop at Grindstone station, and a moment later the brakeman came back into the car, accompanied by the conductor. Despite his resistance, which consisted in an effort to catch hold of the car seats, the Indian was hustled out



of the car and onto the platform. A moment later the train was on its way again. The conductor in his passage through the smoker stopped to take the names and addresses of several of the passengers, including Norman's. The woodsmen visibly subsided, and the episode, apparently, was closed without a ripple.

Norman had been a little surprised that some of the woodsmen had not gone to the Indian's assistance, but he had yet to learn the wholesome respect in which brass buttons are usually held by men of this class.



## CHAPTER IV

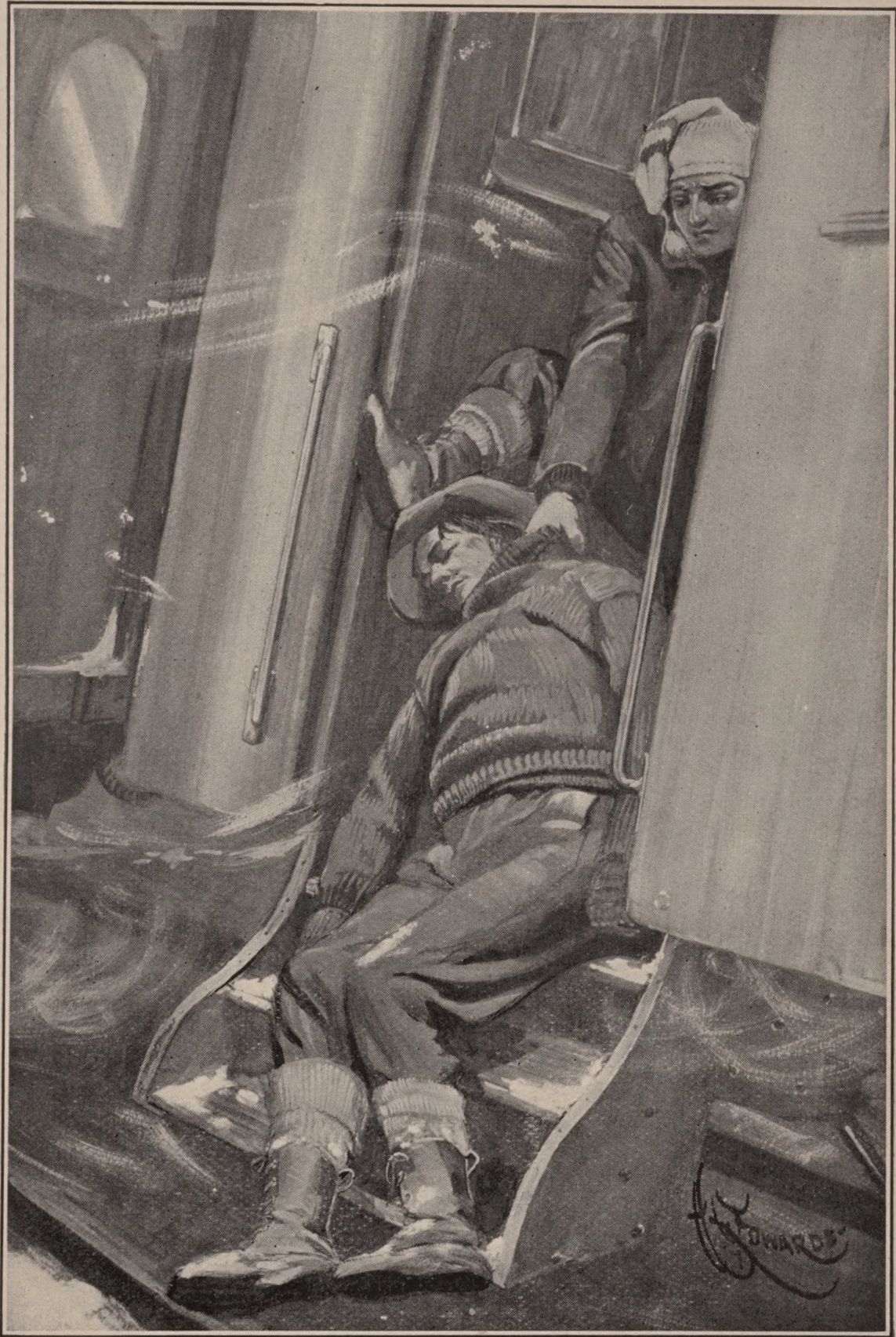
### NORMAN MEETS NATE COLLINS

"Oh, the logger's life's the life for me,  
    Heigho! Heigho!  
Where baked beans grow on the black spruce tree,  
    Heigho! Heigho!  
Where hands are hard but hearts are free;  
Just take your bag and join our spree;  
Come, bunk with us on Letter C——  
    Heigho! Heigho! Heigho!"

The voices of the woodsmen joined lustily in this song — the evident composition of some camp poet — in a strenuous attempt to make up in enthusiasm and noise for any possible lack of harmony.

The atmosphere of the overheated car was becoming intolerable, and Norman felt obliged to forego the succeeding stanzas of the song, for the sake of securing a breath of pure air. As he stepped out into the vestibule, he shivered with the cold, and for the first time during the day began to have some appreciation of the rigors of a Maine winter. Through the windows he noted the gusts of wind that whistled about the train and went whirling into the woods beyond the track among the swaying tree-tops, carrying along a burden of snow. Norman was about to return to the smoking-car, for he was still loath to part company





NORMAN FELT THAT THE INDIAN WOULD SLIP FROM HIS GRASP.

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with the woodsmen, when, through the windows in the door of the vestibule, he caught sight of the swarthy features of the Indian who had been put off the train at Grindstone. He was riding upon the narrow car-step that projected beyond the closed door, maintaining his precarious foothold by hanging to the brass side rails with hands already cramped and numbed with the cold. Norman recognized the fact that the man was in a position of great peril. At any moment he might lose his precarious hold and be thrown from the train, amid conditions that would probably insure his death, even if he were not killed outright by the fall. Obviously his great danger had partially sobered the Indian. There was a wild appeal in his eye, and it was evident that he was shouting some call for help; but his voice was drowned in the whistle of the wind and the roar of the train.

To think, with Norman, was to act. Hastily pulling up the platform above the steps to the vestibule, he swung open the door, and, with one hand upon the side railing, reached forward with the other and grasped the Indian firmly by the collar of his sweater, securing at the same time a good grip upon the deerskin vest which lay beneath it. His assistance did not come a moment too soon. Scarcely had he secured his hold upon him, when the Indian's half-frozen hands relaxed their hold upon the side rail, and he lurched outward with a force that almost dragged Norman from the steps. Fortunately the boy was able to brace one of



his feet against the narrow door-casing, and save both himself and the Indian. It was fortunate for Norman that he was a strong boy, for it was only by a supreme effort that he was able to pull the big Indian forward, face down, upon the steps, and hold him there with both feet clear of the step, and nothing save Norman's grip upon him to save him from falling from the train. It was a moment of great peril. Norman raised his voice to the highest pitch and shouted for help; but the woodsmen in the smoking-car were still singing the interminable verses descriptive of life at the camp on Letter C, and failed to hear him. The situation was desperate. Norman felt that he could not maintain his hold much longer, and in spite of all he could do the Indian would slip from his grasp, if, indeed, he did not pull him after him. Fortunately, help was at hand. A passenger on his way through the vestibule saw the situation, and opening the door of the smoker, gave a call for help. There was an immediate response. The woodsmen ceased their song, and came rushing into the vestibule. Strong hands were laid upon the Indian and he was promptly dragged up the steps and into the smoker, where he and Norman immediately became the center of a crowd of excited and curious men.

"How did he git there?" questioned a number of the group in chorus.

"I don't know," gasped Norman, who was still panting from his exertions. "I suppose he waited until



the train started and then tried to get aboard again. I saw him hanging on, and lent him a hand."

"Ah gass you reach heem 'bout rat tam," declared a big Frenchman whom the other woodsmen called Pete. "Ba gosh! I t'ink hees life ban save ba you!"

"That's so," "Sure t'ing," "Bat yo' life," came from the others of the group, whose members were evidently of mixed nationalities.

"I think not," said Norman, deprecatingly. "If you fellows hadn't got along just when you did, I reckon we'd both have got a tumble."

"You do beeg job youse'f jus' sam'," insisted Pete, and it was evident that his companions coincided in this opinion.

"What's the row now, boys?" demanded the big brakeman, who had just entered the smoker and saw that something unusual had occurred. "Well! Well! of all things, if there isn't that Injun again!" he added in amazement, as his eye fell upon the big red man, whom the men had placed in one of the front seats, where he sat blinking in a dazed but growing appreciation of his narrow escape. "How'd that critter get back here?"

"He tried to get on the train as we were leaving Grindstone," explained Norman.

"De boy here save heem hees life," interposed Pete.

"With the help of the fellows here," added Norman.

"Looks to me as if his fingers were nipped a little," declared the brakeman.



"Not quite, but mighty nigh to it," returned a big woodsman who was chafing the Indian's numbed hands.

"Will you look after him?" asked the brakeman, turning to Norman.

"I'll do my best."

"Thanks. I don't imagine he'll try to fly his kite again. Looks pretty supple. Harry McMurray says he's never had a better man in his crews. Straight as a string in camp. Seems as if he always made his trips to the woods occasions for celebrating. He's made the journey in sections more'n once. We can't stand for any funny business aboard the train, you know."

"Of course not," acquiesced Norman. "Did I understand you to say that he's bound for Harry McMurray's camps?"

"Sure! He's worked for him off and on for some years past. I notice that when a man goes with McMurray for a winter he generally gets a habit of drifting back again. It's wonderful what a hold that fellow gets on his men, and they say he's a driver, too. The company has a lot of confidence in him. He's 'It' up there."

"I'm bound for one of his camps myself," confided Norman.

"Well, you'll like McMurray," returned the brakeman, confidently. "They all do. I must get out," he added hastily, as a shrill whistle floated back from the engine. "We're coming into Stacyville."

The brakeman hurried away, and Norman took the



vacant seat beside the Indian, which had, apparently, been reserved for him by common consent. It was evident from the friendly looks cast in his direction, that his rescue of the Indian had aroused the curiosity and won the good-will of the woodsmen. The Indian still sat in a half stupor; but big Pete, who had taken a seat facing him, hastened to assure Norman that the man he had so bravely rescued would suffer no ill effects from his adventure.

“She be all rat prattee soon,” he announced.

“I’m glad to hear it,” said Norman. “Do you know him?”

“Ba cripe! I t’ink so. She ban Solomon Sockabasin. ’Mos’ ev’ry wan know heem. Dey call heem Sol Soc.”

“Do you know Harry McMurray?”

“Ba tonnerre! I gass so. I work wit’ heem, two, tree winter.”

“That’s where I’m going.”

“Ba gosh! dat good. I ban go dere mase’f.”

“Do you know Nate Collins?”

“M’sieu Colleens! De scalarre? I know heem long tam. Work wit heem two, tree winter — mebbe more.”

“Well, I was going to meet him at Sherman. I’ve never seen him, and shouldn’t know him. I wish you would point him out to me. My name is Norman Carver.”

“Wit’ plaisir.”



At this point the Indian, who had been curled up in a corner of the seat in a half stupor, suddenly straightened up, and gave an uncertain glance at the occupants of the car. A partial appreciation of the situation appeared to dawn upon his fuddled senses. His eye brightened as his gaze rested upon Norman, and he laid a friendly hand upon the boy's shoulder.

"Me know. Saveum Sol's life. Sol no forgetum," he said.

"That's all right," returned Norman, with some embarrassment. "Any of the fellows would have done the same in my place."

"Sol no forgetum," reiterated the Indian.

"Sherman! Sherman!" called the brakeman, as the train drew up at a small station.

Pete hurried out of the car and a moment later returned with a tall, spare man, whose only equipment appeared to be a pair of snow-shoes and a scaler's rule.

"M'sieu Carvarre, M'sieu Colleens," announced Pete, pausing in front of Norman.

"Glad to know you, Mr. Carver," said the newcomer, with a cordial handshake. "Your father has written me about you. He and I were boys together. We slept side by side in the same bunk the first winter that we were in the woods." He took a seat beside Pete, facing Norman, and looked at the boy with kindly interest. "I should have suspected who you were, even if Pete Bedotte hadn't pointed you out. You favor your father."



"I've been told there was a family resemblance," said Norman, "and I've often heard my father speak of you."

"We had a great many good times together when we were youngsters," returned the scaler, "and I hope I may be able to help you enjoy your winter in the woods."

"Thank you," returned Norman, gratefully. "This is my first visit to the big woods, and I may ask a good many foolish questions."

"Questions of that kind are never foolish," returned the scaler, kindly. "Boys who ask them are the ones who are willing to learn. I shall be glad at all times to give you any information that I can. The brakeman tells me that you pulled our friend Sol here out of a tight fix," he added, with an abrupt change of subject.

"Dat ban jus' so," corroborated Pete.

"Any one of the men here would have done the same in my place," declared Norman, deprecatingly.

"Perhaps so," said the scaler, doubtfully. "We can't any of us tell just what we might do in a pinch. The fact remains, however, that you saved him. Depend upon it, my boy, you have won him for all time. These Indians are not easy to get close to, but they never forget a kindness, and are very loyal in their friendships. Hey, Sol?"

"Sol no forgetum," returned the Indian, stolidly.

The scaler nodded his head approvingly; and, turn-



ing to Pete, began to question him regarding the logging operations at the camps about Quadrate Lake. From their conversation Norman learned that the big Frenchman had been at work under Harry McMurray since early fall, and that he had been called home by the illness of his wife. He also learned that the most of the crews were still yarding; but that they expected to begin hauling to the landings about the middle of January, and that the company was planning to secure thirty millions of logs. These facts, however, had very little meaning to him, and he improved the opportunity to study the tall scaler. Nathan Collins was one of the best-known men in northern Maine, a clear-headed man of affairs, who, though he lived on a farm, had won a wide reputation as a successful guide and woodsman. He was a close observer and lover of nature, who had ranged the big woods more or less from boyhood, who had worked in the lumber-camps and on the drives, who was thoroughly skilled in woodcraft, and who was honored by all who knew him for his sterling character and his practical common sense. Although past middle life, his form was as erect, his eye was as bright and his mind as active as at any period of his life. The best woodsmen admitted that it was no small task to follow him in the forest; for he apparently made play of long tramps that taxed the endurance of much younger men, whom hard work and practical experience were supposed to have toughened to all the rigorous requirements of the wilderness. He was a man of



good height, full-chested, square-shouldered, long of body and arm, and seemingly indefatigable in any work he undertook. Time had dealt lightly with him. His hair was only slightly tinged with gray, and the first white streaks were just beginning to show on the sides of his beard. His eyes were kindly, and blue. He looked one squarely in the face in conversation, and spoke with a certain calmness, and deliberation of speech, that never failed to command the respect and hold the attention of his hearer.

In the company of this interesting man, together with big Pete Bedotte, whose quaint expressions were a constant source of entertainment, and the Indian, whose comments, though made mostly in monosyllables, were frequently very pat to the subject under discussion, Norman continued his journey, until about the middle of the afternoon, when the party left the train at Gamewood siding. This was a lumber-camp in the midst of the forest, which served as a distributing-point for the supplies forwarded to the various camps of the Lakeland Lumber Company.

Norman was conscious, as he stood with his companions upon the long log platform beside the iron track that stretched away from sight into the unbroken wilderness, that he had for weeks to come bidden good-by to old scenes; that his long journey was practically ended, and that he was about to enter upon a new life that would be vastly different in its associations and its experiences from any he had known before.



## CHAPTER V

### A NIGHT AT GAMEWOOD SIDING

"How are you, Mr. Collins?"

"How are you, Hardy? Glad to see you!"

The scaler shook hands very cordially with a short, thick-set, swarthy-complexioned man who came to greet him from the upper part of the long log platform where some express packages had been deposited.

"Didn't know you patronized the express fellows," he said, with a smile.

"We don't when we can help it," returned Hardy. "We run most of our supplies onto our sidetrack in carload lots. Who have you here?" he added, turning to Norman.

"This is my young friend, Norman Carver. He's going to try the clerk's job at Camp 4. Shake hands with Dave Hardy, foreman of Camp No. 1," he said, turning to Norman. "This is the distributing-point for all the company's camps in this section," continued the scaler, after the formalities had been observed. "Dave is handling supplies for about two hundred men and forty or fifty horses — and looking after the crews in two camps besides."

"Just about work enough to keep me out of mis-



chief," said Hardy, lightly, a rare smile lighting up his rugged features. "I'm mighty glad to know you, Carver. Was on the lookout for you. Mr. Ordway wrote me you were coming."

"When does the next tote-team go to Quadrate Lake?" inquired the scaler.

"I'm layin' out to send Vede Pelotte in there to-morrow morning, if a carload of oats I'm expecting shows up on the freight."

"Then I guess we'll hang up with you to-night," said the scaler, "and go along with Vede in the morning. I'd be glad to hoof it; but I'm afraid it might be a little strenuous for Norman at the start. I expect, however, that he'll be able to hold his own with any of us before the winter's gone."

"Sure thing," responded Hardy, with a glance at Norman's trim, athletic figure. "Built just right for it. Take your things up to the beaver house, and make yourselves at home. Be with you a little later. You'll find Mrs. Hardy there. She's clerking for us this winter."

"The beaver house?" repeated Norman, inquiringly, as, extension-case in hand, he followed the scaler toward the collection of log camps that stood a short distance beyond the station platform.

"Yes, that's what he said," returned Mr. Collins, with a smile. "It's the name woodsmen in this section give the small camps used by the boss and the clerk. It's really the camp office and store. Usually the



scalers stop there too, although, occasionally, they are provided with a small camp of their own. Here we are," he added, stopping before a small log building, the door of which, hung upon wooden hinges, was made of rough boards cleated together. The space between these boards was battened with pieces of laths. A straight piece of rounded maple was securely nailed to the front of this door, and served as a stationary latch, which, sliding over a large plug somewhat rounded in the center, and securely driven into an auger-hole in one of the logs, held the door, when closed, securely in place. It was one of many ingenious devices, born of the necessities of the woods life, which were to come to Norman's attention, and his glance rested upon it with curious interest.

At the very threshold the door was pushed open by Mrs. Hardy, who gave them a very cordial welcome. She was a dark-haired woman of medium size, quick of motion, and with an alert, intelligent face. She was simply but neatly dressed, and the primitive camp surroundings served only to emphasize the fact that she was a very capable woman and a born lady. Norman learned later, from Mr. Collins, that she was a graduate of one of the State normal schools, and for a number of years prior to her marriage to Hardy had been a successful teacher.

"Come right in," she said, heartily.

"This is Norman Carver, Mrs. Hardy," announced the scaler, as they entered the camp.



"I'm pleased to know you, Mr. Carver," was the smiling response. "Dave and I have been expecting you for the past day or two. Just hang your things up on those nails back of the door, and make yourself perfectly at home. This house will be yours to-night. We shall give you full possession."

"We didn't come here to turn you out of house and home," protested the scaler.

"You don't need to," declared Mrs. Hardy, cordially. "I'm going home to Aerie lake on the 4:30 freight to act as chaperon for Miss Margie Seavey. She's been keeping house for her father at their cottage by the lake, and is anxious to make a tour of the camps."

"Her father is a member of the Lakeland Company, and has general charge of its sawmills and logging operations in this section, with headquarters at Aerie lake," explained the scaler.

"I beg pardon," said Mrs. Hardy, addressing Norman; "I supposed you knew all about it."

"I really don't know anything about it," confessed Norman. "My father's interest is a silent one, and — well — he has never discussed his business affairs with me. It may, perhaps, surprise you, but I never even knew of his connection with this company until he decided to send me up here."

"Your father always did have a way of keeping his own counsel — even when he was a boy," observed Mr. Collins.



"I hope the men won't learn of father's interest," added Norman. "I want to stand on my own footing. That was also father's wish."

"You need have no worry about that," assured Mrs. Hardy. "Only two or three of the foremen know it, and they are not in the habit of sharing their confidences with the men."

"They are woodland sphinxes. They have to be," added Mr. Collins.

"I'm glad to know it," said Norman, in a tone of relief.

"Miss Seavey and I are going to make you lots of trouble at Camp 4 for a day or two," declared Mrs. Hardy, with a smile. "We shall preempt the beaver house. It won't be so bad, however, for us to stop at Camp 4 as it would be at some of the others. They have a special mansion for the scalers there."

"A converted grain-hovel," explained Mr. Collins.

"You will feel repaid for all your sacrifices when you meet Miss Seavey," continued Mrs. Hardy. "I assure you she is a very charming young lady. What! blushing?" she added, with dancing eyes, holding up a warning finger, as a faint flush mantled Norman's face. "Really, I don't know as it will be safe for me to let you become acquainted with her. But there, make yourselves at home. I must run over to the main camp and speak to the cook."

Throwing a cape over her shoulders, Mrs. Hardy left the beaver house, followed a moment later by the



scaler; and, seating himself in a big chair by the fire, Norman proceeded to study, at some leisure, the camp and its equipment.

Like all the buildings in the clearing, it was made of logs. It was a 20x14 structure, divided into two rooms by a board partition running from side to side midway of its length. The rear room was sheathed up with mill boards, over which had been pasted and hung a number of illustrations cut from pictorial publications, and a good sized collection of highly colored advertising-chromos. This was evidently used by the Hardys as a bedroom. To the left of the bedroom door, in the front room, stood a big Franklin stove, the pipe from which projected through the roof. On one side of this stove a hole had been cut about two feet from the floor through the partition, enabling the stove to furnish heat for both rooms. On the right of the bedroom door, against the partition, was a camp "desk," an inclined table made out of box-boards, and supported by two board braces which extended at a sharp angle from the outer edge of the cross cleats to the floor, where they were securely spiked. The high stool which stood before this "desk" was of woods manufacture, and riveted Norman's attention. It was a disc, about eight inches thick, sawed from the end of a hardwood log. Into the bottom of this disc had been inserted a hardwood pedestal about two feet in length and four inches in diameter. This was firmly set in a hole in the floor, which was made of hewn logs. It



looked for all the world like a big toadstool, but evidently served the practical purpose for which it was intended.

The space between the logs of which the beaver house was built was thoroughly chinked with moss. Though rough, the structure was cosy; and, despite the low temperature outside, Norman was obliged to close the draught of the stove to prevent the room from becoming uncomfortably hot.

Two large covered boxes, securely padlocked, that had evidently served originally as packing-cases, stood in one corner at the front of the office room. Above them were several rough board shelves, piled high with "home-knit" mittens, leggings, and stockings, boxes of plug tobacco, lamp- and lantern chimneys, lumbermen's rubbers, matches, and various other articles of merchandise.

"What's this?" inquired Norman of Mrs. Hardy, who reentered the beaver house while he was inspecting the articles.

"That's our wangan."

"Your wangan?"

"Yes — the woods name, you know — for a camp store."

"And are these big boxes part of the outfit?"

"Yes, a very important part. They contain our ready-made clothing department. We can fit you out with caps, shirts — blue or red — trousers, sweaters, teamsters' coats, mackinaws or pontiacs."



“Mackinaws and pontiacs? May I ask what those are?” inquired Norman.

“Those are coats very much in style with woodsmen,” returned Mrs. Hardy. “Mackinaws are made out of heavy woven woolen cloth, similar to what horse blankets are made of. They have a belt of the same material and very much resemble a Norfolk in cut. The goods from which they are made are usually woven in plaids, and frequently in colors loud enough to be heard a long distance. The pontiacs are also woolen coats, single-breasted, but without the belts. The runners tell us that they are made of goods that are knit and shrunk. Like the mackinaws, they are very warm, and well suited to the needs of the woods.”

“Do the men patronize the wangan much?”

“Yes, to a large extent — especially in the matter of smoking and chewing-tobacco. They persist in calling it the ‘roguery-box,’ and so it is, I presume, in some cases. The Lakeland Company, however, has been content to charge its crews merely a fair profit on wangan supplies.”

“Some of the men bring about all they need for the winter in their bags or extenders,” added Mr. Collins, who had re-entered the beaver house in season to catch the last part of Mrs. Hardy’s statement. “I know of one man who even tries, and with some success, to sponge his tobacco out of the men. He saves ’most every cent he earns during the winter, and then squanders it all with the most lavish prodigality in one roar-



ing debauch when he goes out of the woods with his wad in the spring."

"He doubtless figures that he throws away a glass of rum every time he spends a dime at the wangan," said Mrs. Hardy. "There are just as many kinds of every-day human nature in the logging woods as anywhere else."

"And a rather greater percentage of odd characters, I reckon," added Mr. Collins.

"Don't you get lonesome here where there are no other ladies?" asked Norman, turning to Mrs. Hardy.

"Not often. My work keeps me too busy to think about it. We have to mail the central office at Bangor every other Monday a very minute account of the fortnight's operations — the work of the different crews; the logs cut, and who cut them; the logs hauled, and by whom; the supplies received, and how distributed; the wangan sales; the pay accounts of the men — all these, and many other matters have to be kept in detail, so that there is little time for vain regrets. Busy people are contented 'most anywhere. Besides, I know that if the life here should ever pall upon me, I could take the train and in a short time be back again in my own comfortable and cosy little home."

"Your list of a clerk's duties makes me distrustful of my own fitness for the work," said Norman, dubiously.

"No question about it. You'll do finely," returned Mrs. Hardy, with conviction.



"You must excuse me now," she added, opening the door to the sleeping-room. "I must pack up a few things before the freight gets along."

"Your nights come early here," said Norman to Mr. Collins, noting the long shadows on the floor.

"Yes, it begins to get dark about four o'clock," was the response. "Guess we'd better light up a little," and rising from his seat beside the stove, the scaler lighted the lamps that were fastened at several places on the wall.

"A little light on the subject, eh?" said Dave Hardy, who entered the beaver house while this work was in progress.

"Yes. Thought I might be useful as well as ornamental," returned the scaler.

"Is that the freight coming?" inquired Mrs. Hardy, appearing from the sleeping room in cloak and hat.

"Due in about five minutes," returned her husband. "You needn't rush, though. I reckon they'll have a car or two to sidetrack for us."

Soon after the long freight pulled in. Many of its cars were flat "empties" which were evidently being carried along to be loaded at the sawmills further up the line.

When they had said their good-bys to Mrs. Hardy, and the long train had taken its departure, Norman accompanied the scaler and Dave Hardy back to the beaver house.

"I think we'd better get our supper ahead of the



men," said the foreman, as the door closed behind them. "I've spoken to the cook, and he'll have it ready for us. You'll find a chance in the bedroom if you'd like to wash up."

A few minutes later Norman and the scaler followed Hardy into the cook's camp, a low structure, built, though on a considerably larger scale, on much the same plan as the beaver house. It was a big room, on one side of which was a large cooking-range over which the cook and his assistant, with sleeves rolled up, and wearing big aprons of white canvas, were busily engaged in preparing a supper for fifty hungry men. Volumes of steam were rising from big kettles and the atmosphere of the camp was filled with appetizing odors of cooking food.

On the side of the camp opposite the stove were set four long, rough tables, covered with figured oilcloth of a dull-brown color. Long settees of hewn logs, with legs set in auger-holes, extended the full length of each table on either side. The plates and other dishes with which the tables were set were all of tin, while iron knives, forks and spoons did duty for tableware. Big tin basins in the center of the table were filled with steaming food. Some contained stewed prunes, others boiled potatoes, and still others a beef "stifle." There were also basins of warmed-over beans, and big tin plates heaped high with light, white biscuits, hot from the oven. Smaller plates, also of tin, held big squares of butterine, which tasted so well





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that Norman never suspected it to be anything but a genuine dairy product. Pint dippers stood beside each plate, which the cookee proceeded to fill from the steaming nozzle of a big ten-quart teapot. With the addition of granulated sugar and condensed cream, Norman was ready to pronounce this beverage quite equal to anything of the kind he had ever found in the best hotels of his native city. It is probable, though, that the surprisingly fine appetite he brought to the repast had something to do with this judgment. Hearty eaters are the rule in the big woods, and already Norman was coming into harmony with his surroundings. The food tasted good in spite of the rude and primitive character of the service, and he was surprised at the substantial meal he was able to make.

"They feed very differently now from what they used to in the old days," said the scaler. "When I first went into the woods all we had for a diet was pork and beans, three times a day; sheet biscuits, molasses doughnuts, and tea sweetened with molasses. Beef, sugar, potatoes, butter, coffee, condensed milk, etc., were luxuries undreamed of in those days."

"Sure thing," asserted Hardy, "but you see we have to feed well. Otherwise we couldn't hold our men."

"By the way, what has become of Pete Bedotte and the Indian?" inquired Norman.

"Oh, they are pretty well in to Quadrate Lake by this time," returned the scaler. "They struck out as soon as they left the train. Only twenty-two miles to go."



"What, walking?" asked Norman, incredulously.

"Sure," replied Hardy, with a smile of amusement at Norman's very evident surprise. "Pelting the road is a good deal of a habit in the big woods."

"I don't want you to make any exceptions to your rules in my case," said Norman, earnestly. "I want to be used exactly like the other men."

"So you shall be," returned Hardy, with a smile. "The men get many a lift on the tote-teams, and I've made all arrangements for you to go into Camp 4 with Vede Pelotte at half-past five in the morning."

As they stood outside the cook's camp for a moment before returning to the beaver house, Norman could not help being impressed with the solemn grandeur of his surroundings. A myriad of frosty stars twinkled brightly in the clear, cold sky. The moon was beginning to show above the tall spruces and firs that circled the clearing, bathing the rough camps and hovels in its soft and mellow light. Down the logging-roads that led from the clearing came the tinkle of bells, and the hoarse shouts of men. Horses and crews were returning, after a hard day's work in the woods, to the generous fare and rough comforts of the camp.

Slowly Norman filled his lungs with the clear night air, cold, dry, and pungent with the aromatic odors of the spruce, the cedar, and the balsam-fir. Already the spirit of the forest was weaving its charm about his heart, and he was still under its magic spell when he followed his companions back into the beaver house.



## CHAPTER VI

“JUMPING” A FRENCHMAN, AND WHAT CAME OF IT

“You will have the whole ranch to yourselves,” announced Dave Hardy, as he pulled on a blanket mackinaw over his heavy sweater, and took down a pair of snow-shoes from a peg beside the door.

“Sorry to lose you, Dave,” said the scaler, regretfully.

“And I’m sorry to go,” declared Hardy, with a smile; “but, you see, I told Jim Cookson I’d be with him to-night. I guess you know him — don’t you?”

“Yes. Met him one winter over on Sourdnahunk,” said the scaler.

“Well, he’s boss at our Beetle Brook camp — ’bout five miles from here — this winter. He’s yarded some mighty handsome spruce down there. Going to begin hauling to the landing with two of his teams to-morrow. I’ve got to settle up with some of his men who are going out in the morning. I may send two or three of the best of them into camp at Quadrate Lake. They won’t be entirely through yarding there for a month yet.”

“Don’t need to,” said the scaler. “It’s a short haul, and all down hill.”



"Oh, we'll hustle it into the lake, all right, if the snow holds on. The company's out for a big cut this winter, and McMurray's willing to take some chances."

"How big a cut do you expect?" asked the scaler, with interest.

"Well, we're out for thirty million, and I don't think we'll come far short of it, if these conditions hold good. There's only five feet of snow in the woods at the present time. Well, take care of yourselves," and, tucking his snow-shoes under his arm, Hardy passed out into the night.

"I should think he'd be afraid to take such a trip in the night," declared Norman, when the door had closed behind him.

"Oh, he's used to it," returned the scaler, with a smile. "It's a beautiful night, and he'll make the jaunt very easily on his snow-shoes. Why, bless you, I've been out in the woods many a night when it was so dark I couldn't see my hand before me."

"But he said he was going to pay off the men. He must have some money with him," suggested Norman.

"Quite a wad of it," admitted the scaler. "I calculate, though, it's 'bout as safe in his pocket as it would be in the Bank of England. No one in these parts would care to get into a scrap with Dave Hardy, for all he's such a quiet fellow, and 'tends strictly to business. Most of the men are paid with time bills, but we have to use a little money along with them. Draw up to the fire and make yourself comfortable,"



he added, cordially, as he swung back the cover of the big box stove and dropped several sticks of wood upon its glowing coals. "The wind's fetching 'round into the north, and we're going to have a frosty night; but I reckon we'll keep fairly comfortable in spite of it."

The door swung open on its creaking hinges, to admit a tall, lank woodsman, whose sallow countenance was half hidden by a fortnight's growth of scraggly beard.

"How air ye, Mr. Collins?" he said, cordially, seating himself upon an empty soap-box in front of the stove.

"How are you, Skinner?" responded the scaler. "Thought you were logging on Sebois waters this winter."

"So I was — for a spell," admitted the newcomer, "but I couldn't stand the pressure. They've got everything up there this winter; 'bout half of Europe, an' not one in ten on 'em can speak United States. They're a pretty green lot; but men are scarce, 'n' 'most anything goes, these days. I reckon there ain't many on 'em ever smelt boughs afore."

"Our woods crews are not what they used to be when they were made up almost wholly of our farmers and their sons," admitted Mr. Collins; "but then you see we didn't lumber on any such large scale as we do now. The city employment agencies scrape up some mighty poor material at times. I understand, however, that the Lakeland Lumber Company has been



fortunate enough to get some smart crews this winter."

"Good workers," admitted Skinner, grudgingly. "Let McMurray alone for that; but 'most all on 'em are frog-eaters."

"Well, I've usually found a good French crew about as satisfactory as any," declared the scaler. "They're not inclined to be quarrelsome, and, barring a disposition to drift about more or less from one camp to another, are pretty good men in the woods, or, for that matter, on the drive. Shake hands with Mr. Carver," he added, with an evident desire to change the subject.

"Glad to see ye, Carver," said Skinner, affably, extending a calloused hand. "Goin' to stop a spell?"

"He's going to clerk at Quadrate Lake," explained the scaler.

"Well, I reckon Billy Eustace will be mighty glad to see ye. He's been the whole show there, so far, they tell me, layin' out the cuttin's, keepin' books, 'tendin' wangan, filin' saws — on the go all the time. The boys say he hain't ben out here this winter."

"I hope I may be able to help him some," said Norman, modestly.

"Oh, ye can — a whole heap," returned Skinner, confidently. "As you was sayin', Mr. Collins," he continued, turning to the scaler, "these Canucks are peaceful fellers; but they're tame — too durn tame for me. Work here's a good deal like treadin' a threshin'-



machine. Nothin' doin' on the side. It's eat, work, 'n' sleep six days in the week, 'n' eat 'n' sleep the seventh. I'd like t' see suthin' shake up the dry bones a bit. I would, by gum!"

"You didn't come here, I reckon, to hold parlor charades," said the scaler, coldly.

The door opened to admit ten or a dozen woodsmen, who evidently knew Mr. Collins, and who greeted him cordially in broken English that proclaimed their Canadian French origin. They were mostly young men, tall and straight, and lithe of movement. Their hair, still wet, was neatly combed, and their faces glowed from recent scrubbings at the camp sink. As they nodded in a friendly way to Norman, he was impressed by the jaunty grace with which they wore the rough garments of the woods — and somehow the moccasins, larrigans, leggings, sweaters, mackinaws, and pon-tiacs, seemed in perfect harmony with the balsam-laden atmosphere, and primitive surroundings of the camp.

It was evident that the coming of these visitors was irritating to Skinner, who retired into the bedroom, from the door of which he scowled upon them wrathfully. "Frog-eaters," he muttered, under his breath, in tones that were plainly audible to Norman. If, however, the new visitors heard the disparaging epithet, they held their peace; although Norman fancied that he saw more than one resentful glance shot in Skinner's direction.



"Where's that cookee who was here last winter, boys?" inquired Mr. Collins, presently, when the progress of logging operations had, apparently, been discussed to a standstill.

"He ban here," responded several of the men in chorus.

"Got that accordion?"

"Yass."

"Well, just ask him to trot it in here, and give us a tune or two. Tell any of the boys outside, who'd like to hear him, to come along in."

"We mak' de wan beeg crowd," returned one of the men, deprecatingly.

"Not a bit of it," protested the scaler, heartily. "Plenty o' room. Tell the boys to come right along — the more the merrier."

Several of the men left the camp, and presently returned, triumphantly escorting the cookee, a dark-eyed, rosy-cheeked young man, eighteen or nineteen years of age, and his accordion. Behind them crowded a number of woodsmen, smiling and expectant. The cookee was evidently the camp's musician, and the members of the crew were obviously proud of his accomplishments. With rough but hearty deference, he was accorded the high, home-made stool before the desk, while the men filled the available seats, sat in rows upon the floor with backs against the wall, and overflowed into the bedroom, from the door of which a compact group gave rapt attention to the music.



Norman was astonished at the manner in which their entertainer managed his somewhat clumsy instrument, and the stirring strains he was able to draw from it. It was evident that he played entirely by ear, and yet with surprising skill and expression. "Money Musk," "Fisher's Hornpipe," "The Good Old Summer-time," "Hiawatha," and various other lively airs — old and new — followed one another in rapid succession. Unconsciously Norman was soon joining in the tap of moccasins upon the floor, as the men, in perfect time, beat out an accompaniment with their feet.

"These Frenchmen are full of music," whispered Mr. Collins to Norman, as the cookee brought a selection to a close. "Just notice that fellow in the doorway."

The music started again, and Norman turned to look at a young man who stood near the front of the group in the doorway of the bedroom. He was tall and slight of build, and his rapt expression told how strong a spell the music had wrought upon him. Every muscle of his body seemed to respond to the stirring strains of the accordion. His shoulders rose and fell, first on one side and then the other, with a swaying motion, in perfect time, and in a very ecstasy of enjoyment. It was evident that the music exercised a strange but potent charm upon his spirit, and he gave himself up to its delights with utter abandon.

"He's fairly strung on wires," whispered Norman, as the cookee rested a moment from his labors.



"He's a jumper," responded the scaler.

Norman was about to ask an explanation of this term when the music started again. The cookee had played but a few strains, however, when Skinner, standing in the rear of the group about the bedroom door, thrust forward a long arm and gave the rapt young Frenchman a resounding whack between the shoulder-blades.

"Hit him!" he hissed.

With a yell of terror, his victim, acting promptly upon the suggestion, hit the man in front of him a blow that sent him reeling into the center of the room. It seemed to Norman as if the young music-lover had suddenly gone daft. The rapt expression had given place to a very frenzy of fear.

"Merci! O mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Oh-oo — oo-ah — oo —" he shouted, in terrified accents, jumping frantically up and down in an apparent agony of apprehension. His eyes stared wildly, the sweat started from his forehead, and he fell, moaning and groveling, to the floor.

Norman leaped to his feet, his face pale with alarm. He felt certain that the young man who had attracted his attention by his intense enjoyment of the music had been carried away by his emotions and stricken with sudden insanity. Above the heads of the group at the bedroom door he caught a glimpse of Skinner's sallow face, showing white and ghastly even through the stubble that covered it.



The music ceased abruptly. A moment's ominous silence fell upon the group, followed by hoarse shouts, and angry curses.

"He jomp heem!" shouted the man who had been struck by Skinner's victim, above the tumult. "Sapre diable! he t'ink he play heem wan smart treek for mak' Odilon Leroux hit Peter Macou. He raise de row, monjee! we geeve heem de fit."

"No, no — de codfeesh!" yelled another.

"Yass, yass, de codfeesh, de codfeesh," came in an approving chorus from a number of the men.

There was a mad rush into the bedroom, where Skinner had leaped upon the bed, and was reaching for Hardy's rifle which hung on wooden pegs at the head of it. Before he was able to possess himself of the weapon, however, strong hands were laid upon him and he was dragged ignominiously to the floor.

"Hands off, ye skunks! Don't ye dare tech me! I'll — I'll hev the heart of the man that interferes with me!" he gasped, in a fury of rage, as he struggled frantically, but in vain, with the men who held him, none too tenderly, upon the floor.

"We'll geeve for you wan nice beeg codfeesh rat away, prattee queek, mebbe," declared Macou, grimly. "Tak' heem out, ma boys."

A moment later the struggling, shrieking, cursing Skinner was borne through the door in the determined grasp of a dozen brawny men.

Norman was amazed to see the young fellow whose



wild outburst had so astonished him, pick himself up from the floor, apparently no worse for his harrowing experience, and follow the procession.

In front of the men's camp lay a big dead cedar which had been hauled there to provide a supply of kindling-wood. Across this log the wildly writhing, protesting, blaspheming Skinner was stretched, strong men holding him down on either side by his arms and legs.

From a near-by hovel Peter Macou made his appearance, brandishing a big salt codfish.

"You wan ver', ver', smart man, M'sieu Skinnaire," he shouted, wrathfully. "You lak to keek up de row — mak' Frenchman jomp — hit oder fellaire. Ha! Ha! ba Joe! You jomp now you'se'f. I geeve you wan grande spanke!"

A shriek of pain and fury came from the unhappy victim, as the codfish, swung by the tail high above Macou's head, descended with a resounding whack upon the seat of Skinner's trousers, but his frenzied anathemas were drowned in the hilarious laughter of the crew.

"I'll have your heart — I'll — I'll kill you!"

"Hooraw! He show de fight. Geeve heem 'noder wan!"

Whack.

"Oh-oo! I'll lay for you! I'll — I'll do you!"

"Dat rat, Pete. Geeve heem good leeckin'!"

Whack.



“Oh, let up! Let up! I tell you! I’ll — Oh, blast your harslet! You’ll be sorry! O-oo! You’ll rue this!”

Skinner’s voice rose in a weird crescendo of wild and incoherent blasphemy.

“Larrup heem! Jomp her on, Pete! Mak’ heem more smart fellaire!” came in chorus from the delighted crew.

“Mebbe you don’ eat heem som’ bullfrog. Mebbe you don’ eat not’ing at all,” panted Pete, as he brought the codfish down again upon his squirming, howling victim.

“You got plaintee ’nuf?” he asked, pausing from his labors.

A muffled groan was the only response from the writhing Skinner.

Pete surveyed him with freshly rising wrath.

“Blam’ you! I know w’at you t’ink. You t’ink: ‘Blam’ you, Pete Macou, I leeck you.’ Ba cripe! I leeck you for dat!” and again the codfish descended upon the wretched Skinner. It was the last straw, and, unable to endure the punishment further, the victim capitulated and begged lustily for mercy, promising better fashions.

The men accepted this abject and humiliating surrender, and escorted the reluctant Macou to the triumphant shelter of the men’s camp, while the discomfited and hysterical Skinner, breathing threats of vengeance, limped painfully back to the beaver house.

“You could have stopped ’em,” he complained to



Mr. Collins, as he sank into a chair by the big stove. "Jest one word from you would ha —"

"But I wouldn't speak it," interposed the scaler, sternly. "You broke the rules of the camp, and did a cowardly act. You richly deserved all you got — and more. If you are afraid to go back with the men, you can take a couple of the extra blankets and camp here on the floor in this front room. Now shut up. I won't make any more talk with you."

"What is a jumper?" asked Norman, who was still in the dark concerning the real reason for the astonishing fracas he had witnessed.

"He's a man who is the victim of a nervous disease," returned the scaler. "The French people are naturally of a highly nervous temperament, and hence furnish many victims of this weakness, which, however, is by no means confined to that race. They are commonly called, however, 'Jumping Frenchmen.' Slap them and shout at them when they are thinking of something else, and they seem to lose all control of themselves. At such times they act immediately upon any suggestion that is made to them — even to the extent of jumping into the river, as has happened more than once on the drives. The more such people are jumped, the worse they become. Harry McMurray has given out word that he would discharge any man caught practising such cruelties; as a result it isn't very common in his crews."

"Then this man will have to go?"



"No. I doubt if the matter ever reaches McMurray's ears. Talebearing is not countenanced among woodsmen."

"Thet feller was havin' sech an elegant dream, I jest couldn't help a-wakin' of him up," groaned Skinner.

"Perhaps you'll be a little more successful hereafter in restraining your rollicking sense of humor," responded the scaler, grimly.

"I didn't mean no harm," protested Skinner.

"It's a mighty poor plan — especially for a mixed-blood Yankee — to criticise any man on account of his race. Human nature averages 'bout the same, whatever language it speaks. I guess we'd better turn in, being as we've got to get up pretty early in the morning."

Shortly after, wrapped in warm blankets, Norman was sleeping soundly upon a cot in the bedroom, the last spring bed he was destined to lie upon for many a day.



## CHAPTER VII

### IN THE HEART OF THE FOREST

The sun had not yet risen above the tree-tops, when Norman and the scaler made their start for Quadrate Lake on Vede Pelotte's tote-team. Early as they were, Dave Hardy was on hand to see them off.

"You must keep Mr. Collins out of mischief," was his parting shot, as they started down the narrow wood-road that wound its way into the dark depths of the forest.

"They're bound to keep me a boy," laughed the scaler, "and I'd just about as soon they would. I don't feel any older than I did when I was a youngster."

"I hope I may be able to say as much when I am your age," returned Norman.

"I think you will," predicted the scaler, confidently.

Norman, seated by his companion's side on a bag of oats, drew the big fur robe, which Dave Hardy had insisted upon their taking, about him a little closer, and made no reply. The long framework which stretched between the two short sleds, and formed a deck for their load, bore a varied cargo — barrels of flour, pork, lard, beans, and frozen fresh codfish; several quarters



of beef; cases of canned stuff and general grocery supplies; the whole crowned with bags of oats, and securely bound in place with a labyrinth of rope. It was a heavy load, but the pair of chunky little blacks that hauled it bore it forward at a good pace over the smooth, hard road, taking advantage of every descending piece of ground to break into a brisk trot.

"Seems to me they've given you a pretty good span, Vede," remarked Mr. Collins to the driver. "Toters usually get the poorest teams. The best ones are used hauling logs," he explained to Norman.

Pelotte slapped one of the horses with the rein, and did not reply at once. It was evident that he regarded the question as one that called for a certain amount of judicial consideration.

"Wall," he said, reflectively, after a moment's pause. "Dey prattee fair hoss, I gass. Wan ban firs' rat' hoss — wort' mebbe wan honder dollaire; but oder wan, ba golly! he mak' me tire'. He not got som' brain on her head. She ban sleepy on bot' hees eye. She eat heem plaintee hay — 'mos' four peck ev'ry day — jus' sam', so I gass we mus' *call* heem a hoss."

"A trifle mixed on genders," whispered the scaler, noting the twinkle in Norman's eye. "Go 'long with you, Vede," he added, in a louder tone. "You know you've got the best tote-team in the bunch. You're simply knocking them a little, so as to dicker around with the company and pick them up cheap in the spring."



"Mebbe I tak' dem for geef', eef de comp'ny t'row een barrel pork an' bean," returned Vede, deprecatingly.

As they talked they emerged from the narrow wood-road into a broad turnpike.

"This is the old military road," announced the scaler, "the main traveled thoroughfare to Fort Kent."

The horses swung into a brisk trot down a long incline. From the foot of this they began the leisurely ascent of a steep hill. Pelotte, with the consideration for his horses characteristic of most teamsters in the big woods, jumped to the ground and walked beside his load. Norman and the scaler, glad of an opportunity to stretch their cramped legs, promptly followed his example.

"Wait here a minute, Vede," requested Mr. Collins, as the team came to a stop on the brow of the hill. "We are on the height of land in this section," he explained to Norman, "and I want to give you a chance to enjoy the view."

Climbing back upon the load, and standing erect, Norman looked in fascinated wonder upon the vast, awe-inspiring panorama that was presented to his gaze. The great forest stretched away on every side into the apparently interminable distance, a rugged succession of ridges and hills, with intervening swamps and lowlands, all heavily wooded with evergreen growths, and looking in the perspective like a landscape clothed in dark-green verdure. Here and there, amid the dark mass of color, were open, snow-clad spaces, winding



like narrow white ribbons through the forest, or widening into broad, plain-like stretches, that marked the frozen surfaces of streams and lakes.

“Most of the country you can see from here is covered with what we call black growth — spruce, hemlock, fir, and cedar,” said the scaler. “There are, to be sure, many hardwood ridges where the primeval birch, beech, and maples are still standing; but even these are so interspersed with the softwood growths, principally spruce and hemlock, that it is hard for one unfamiliar with the forests to distinguish them at a distance.”

Norman drew a long breath.

“What a magnificent country!” he exclaimed, with enthusiasm.

“Nature seems to have specially fitted Maine for a timber growing State,” replied the scaler. “Almost any part of it, no matter how long it has been cleared, will, in a short time, if left alone, come up again to forest growths. It has, too, in very generous measure, the water storage essential to timber production, there being no less than 6,000 streams and 1,800 ponds and lakes within its borders.”

“Those woods look as if there were no end to them,” said Norman, in an awed tone.

“Well, you would have to follow them many miles over the Canadian line to find it,” returned the scaler, with a smile. “Maine has an area of 33,040 square miles. This includes a wilderness area of 22,800



square miles — which is 6,000 square miles more than the combined areas of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Delaware. It also includes more than 3,000 square miles of lake, pond, and river surfaces. The world has heard a great deal about the famous 'Black Forest' of Germany, and yet the wilderness of Maine covers an area more than seven times as large."

"I never dreamed it could be so large," declared Norman, as they resumed their journey.

For a long time they rode in silence. At the foot of the further slope of the hill, from whose top Norman had enjoyed his view of the wild and rugged country, they turned from the main thoroughfare into a narrow, well-worn wood-road that wound a tortuous way through the silent and sombre forest. The one idea of its builders, apparently, had been the greatest possible avoidance of grades. The wisdom of this was apparent to Norman, when he reflected that the steepest pitch on such a road would determine the hauling capacity of every team that passed over it. So close did the big spruces, firs, cedars, and hemlocks stand to the roadsides, that the whiffletrees behind the horses frequently scraped against their trunks in passing; and to such an extent did their big bough tops overlap the roadway high above them, that it seemed like a journey in a long, high tunnel, from which, through occasional breaks in the tall roof, one caught fitful glimpses of blue sky. The trees and bushes bore upon their



branches masses of snow, which sifted down when anything disturbed them, and whose feathery crystals, catching an occasional vagrant sunbeam, glittered with prismatic colors, like the sparkle of innumerable diamonds.

The atmosphere was fragrant with woodsy odors — the pungent scents of the spruces, hemlocks, cedars, and firs. As Norman expanded his lungs with this crisp, balsam-laden air, he felt his pulses throb with a new life and energy. Already the subtle spirit of the great forest, with its solemn tenderness, its perennial fulness of life, and its ever-brooding mystery, was holding him in its magic spell.

“Mr. Collins,” he said, presently, breaking a silence that was becoming almost oppressive, “I’m ashamed of my ignorance. I don’t even know the names of these trees, outside of the pines.”

“Well, no one need ever know it, if you don’t tell them,” said the scaler, with a smile. “Besides, it won’t take you long to learn. For instance,” he added, pointing to a tall tree with dark foliage and rough bark, “that is a red spruce. You should become familiar with this species first of all, for it will constitute the great bulk of the Lakeland Lumber Company’s cut this winter. They expect to get about thirty million.”

“Thirty million trees!” exclaimed Norman, aghast.

“No — not exactly,” said the scaler, with a laugh. “They will get trees enough to scale — that is, to measure — thirty million board feet.”



“And what is a board foot?”

“It is the contents of a board one foot square and one inch thick. This is the common unit of measure for logs and lumber in the United States.”

“I see,” said Norman; “but how do you determine the number of board feet in a log?”

“By means of a log rule invented fifty years or more ago by a man named Holland, and in such general use in this State that it is commonly called the Maine rule. The computations on the basis of board feet are all worked out on this rule by taking the top diameter and the length of the log to be scaled. In making such computations a quarter of an inch has been figured on the scale rule between each prospective board embodied in the contents of a log, to allow for kerf, or cutting waste occasioned in sawing.”

“I should think, when you only took the top diameter of a log, and the bottom diameter was much larger, that there would be a considerable portion of it that wouldn’t get measured at all,” said Norman.

“That’s the chief objection that has been urged against the Maine rule,” said the scaler; “but the operators, who are also in most cases the mill-owners, say the hazards they run, the waste occasioned in driving, and the loss from defective logs, would fully offset any advantage they may secure from the seemingly liberal mode of measurement. In some States a caliper rule is used, and the diameter measured is taken midway of the log. Such a scale is manifestly



less advantageous to the operator, and Maine land-owners have not exacted it."

"How long is this Maine scale rule?" asked Norman, laying his hand upon the square-cornered staff, thickly covered with figures, that lay across the seat beside the scaler.

"Four feet."

"What is the longest log that would be figured on it in board feet?"

"Thirty feet. Anything beyond that must be scaled or measured as two logs. The caliper rule, various styles of which are in use in many of our States, and very generally in Europe, gives the contents of a log in cubic feet. There does not appear to be any immediate prospect, however, of this system coming into very general use in Maine."

"You speak of land-owners, operators, and mill-owners," said Norman. "I thought they were all the same."

"They are in many instances. Quite a portion of the wild lands of the State are owned and operated by the proprietors of sawmills. Great stretches of wild land are also owned and operated by the big pulp-mill companies. The spruce, poplar, and fir on such tracts are, of course, devoted to paper-making, and are thus practically withdrawn from the State's timber supply available for the manufacture of lumber. A very large part of the Maine wilderness, however, is the property of individuals who are not engaged either in the manu-



facture of pulp or lumber. They are called timberland or wild-land owners, and they get their returns from the sale of stumpage."

"And what is stumpage?" asked Norman. "I'm afraid you'll think me awfully green," he added, apologetically.

"Not at all," protested the scaler. "Stumpage means the value of timber in its natural state, or as it stands in the woods. The land-owner sells this standing timber, or stumpage, to the operator, who goes into the woods with men and supplies and cuts it. Such operator may be a mill-owner securing logs for his own saws, or he may be a mere middleman buying his stumpage of the land-owners and selling his logs to the mill-owners."

"About how many spruce logs, for instance, would it ordinarily take to scale a thousand board feet?" inquired Norman.

"That depends of course upon the size of the growth. In the old days an operator wouldn't think of cutting spruce that wouldn't scale a thousand to every six logs. Now, he thinks he is doing very well if he gets logs that will scale a thousand feet to the dozen. They take 'most everything nowadays, down to a pickpole."

"You've probably, in your long experience, seen as much of the Maine woods, Mr. Collins, as any living man," said Norman.

"Well, I've tramped them fairly thoroughly, first and last," admitted the scaler.



"How big should you say from your experience that spruce ever grow?"

"Well, the largest one I ever saw was eighty-seven feet long, and fourteen inches through at the top. It scaled eighteen hundred feet."

"It must have been a monster."

"It was a very giant among the giants. I have heard of taller spruces; but I doubt if any of them would have scaled as much. The biggest spruces cut by the Lakeland Lumber Company last winter were about seventy-five feet long and six inches in diameter at the top. There were not very many of them, however."

"I think I ought to know a red spruce now when I see it," declared Norman, confidently.

"Suppose you point one out," suggested the scaler.

"Well, that big one right ahead there."

"Ah," laughed the scaler, "but that is a fir-tree."

"They look just the same," insisted Norman.

"They have merely a superficial resemblance," explained the scaler. "If you will examine this tree more closely you will notice that its bark is smoother and of lighter color than that of the spruce, that its limbs are more symmetrical and extend much further down the trunk, and, finally, that the foliage is of a slightly brighter shade of green."

"Are they used much for lumber?"

"They were not formerly; but now 'most all operators take them when they are of fair size. They



make very good boards; but are scarcely tough enough for dimension-stuff — that is, for beams, floor-timbers, and joist,” added the scaler, noting the look of inquiry on Norman’s face. “I’ve seen carloads of boards shipped out of this county where fully one-third were fir. I doubt, though, if the people to whom they were consigned ever noticed the difference.”

“How large do they grow?”

“Well, that’s hard telling. Some of them are quite sizable trees. The biggest fir I ever saw in Maine scaled three hundred feet.”

As they talked they emerged from the black growth into a wide stretch of more open territory, upgrown with clumps of grey birch, and many poplars. In the midst of these trees were thousands of young spruce, while here and there a big pine towered in silent majesty far above the trees of lesser growth.

“This is an old burn,” explained the scaler. “Fire ran through here more than fifty years ago, and took everything clean except those scattering pines, which are able to stand a degree of heat that would kill any of the other trees that grow in our Maine forests. Now I want you to notice the wise process by which Nature repaired damages, and planted this tract again to spruce growth. Coniferous trees would not seed in the hot, ash-covered soil. It immediately came up, however, to grey birch and poplar, both of which are rapid-growing, short-lived trees. In a few years these had shaded the ground to such an extent that it was able



to hold a considerable amount of moisture; then amid the birch and poplar thousands of little spruces sprang into life. In time, when the birch and poplar are gone, they will hold undisputed sway, and this tract will again be covered with a dense spruce growth. Lumbermen will come here again for sawlogs; but not in my lifetime or yours."

"Do spruce-trees grow as slowly as that?" inquired Norman.

"The rate of growth on a spruce-tree varies somewhat with its access to light, the fertility of the soil in which it is rooted, and the size it has attained. As the new layers of wood-fibre are deposited annually in concentric rings around the trunk, it is evident that the greater the diameter the greater will be the amount of growth. It is estimated by good authorities that where it is grown under average forest conditions, a spruce-tree six inches in diameter at breast-height is from sixty to eighty years old. Of course spruce of that size may be grown on old fields or burns in considerably less time. The usual life-period of a spruce-tree is thought to be about three hundred years."

"I'd no idea they could be so venerable," confessed Norman.

"It is a little impressive to reflect that many of these big spruces about us stood here when this country was under British rule, and when nobody save Indians, with now and then, perhaps, a wandering Jesuit missionary, traversed these wilds. I've often wondered



what stories they might tell us, if they could only speak."

"I imagine they would be tales of animal life, and love, and tragedy, rather than those of human experience," suggested Norman.

"Very likely," conceded the scaler, "but it would have the interest of truth and the value of accuracy; which is not always the case, I imagine, with many of such stories told by so-called Nature-writers, and which are based in small part upon observation, and in large part upon supposition."

"You don't take much stock in such stories, then?" questioned Norman.

"Well, I've probably seen about as much of the game of this section as any man, but I never felt equal to the task of writing the life of any wild animal," said the scaler, dryly. "Camp 2," he added, laconically, as they passed a group of log buildings that stood by the roadside in a little clearing in the woods. "We'll take dinner at Camp 3 about six miles further on."



## CHAPTER VIII

### SOME REMINISCENCES OF COLONEL GERRISH

For a few miles they rode along in silence. Mr. Collins was apparently absorbed in his own reflections, while Norman was busily turning over in his own mind the new and interesting information that had been given him. "One thing is sure," he reflected, with satisfaction, as he studied the forest growths on either side of the road, "they'll never catch me again on a spruce or fir-tree."

A new impression grew upon him as occasional roads, to the right and left, many of them unused, opened up to his observation new vistas of forest.

"There doesn't seem to be any death here in the woods," he said, presently, rousing himself from his abstraction.

"Every perishing thing in a forest becomes a contributor to its life," said the scaler.

"'Life evermore is fed by death  
In earth and sea and sky;  
And, that a rose may breathe its breath,  
Something must die.'"

he quoted.

"I see you are a lover of Dr. Holland," said Norman, with a smile.



"Yes," admitted Mr. Collins, "I have found much to admire in him. Speaking of death in the forest, however, you must remember that most of the processes of decay are hidden under the deep snow at this season of the year."

"You have spoken of red spruce," said Norman. "Are there other kinds?"

"Yes, black spruce and white spruce. There are other names, but they really refer to conditions of growth, and not to difference in species."

"They must be very hardy trees," suggested Norman.

"They are," assented the scaler. "In fact, they seem to flourish under the roughest and seemingly the most adverse conditions to be found in our Maine woods. The coldest slopes, the highest elevations, and the rockiest and shallowest soils apparently have no terrors for them. They are wonderfully hardy and tenacious of life, and have the vitality to hold their own under nearly all circumstances."

"And have they no enemies?"

"Yes, a host of them. 'Most everything in nature has something to prey upon it — and various parasites, moths, hoppers, flies, and worms give their special, if not undivided, attention to our spruce-trees. There are, for instance, the cone-worm, the bud-worm, the leaf-hopper, the plume-moth, the bud-louse, and the timber-beetle — and probably others that I haven't had time to get acquainted with."



"I think that list will do," declared Norman, laughingly. "I only wonder that we have any spruce-trees left."

"There is a monument to one of the worst insect pests ever known in our Maine woods," said the scaler, pointing to a tall dead tree that towered above some trees of smaller growth a short distance from the road. "We shall see many more of the same kind before we reach Quadrate Lake."

"What kind of a tree is it?" asked Norman, with interest.

"It's a hackmatack — or, as the Maine lumbermen call it, a 'hack.' These trees have a bend at the root, which, when dug out, enables operators to secure from them the 'knees' or right-angle braces so much used in shipbuilding. The same timber, being light and strong, is also largely used in shipyards for top frames. The securing of hack was once an important industry in Maine; but in the eighties nearly all the hackmatack in the Eastern States, and in Canada, was killed by a caterpillar that ate off the leaves for several seasons in succession. Practically all the grown hackmatack in the whole region was killed. The shipbuilders in Maine are now obliged to secure the greater part of what they use in the Lake States — chiefly from Michigan. It was a big, sweeping insect invasion. A friend of mine who visited Labrador in 1891 told me not long ago that he found this work of destruction still going on there."



"It was fortunate those caterpillars didn't trouble the spruce," said Norman.

"Very," agreed the scaler, "but, as it was, they cost the State a great many thousand dollars."

A moment later they came out into a small clearing in the woods, in which were grouped the collection of log houses and horse hovels that constituted Camp 3.

As they drew up in front of the main camp, a bright-faced young man, wearing a mackinaw and soft slouch hat, somewhat the worse for wear, came out of the beaver house and greeted the scaler very cordially.

"We've been looking for you for the past week," he said. "We began to fear you'd deserted us."

"Oh, you can't get rid of me so easily," rejoined the scaler, with a smile. "A bad penny, you know, always returns. Mr. Burton, shake hands with Mr. Carver. Mr. Burton is the boss of Camp 3 — the youngest and one of the best in the employ of our company," he added.

"You must make some allowance for Mr. Collins," said Burton, giving Norman's hand a hearty shake. "He's so much of a boy himself that he takes special delight in boosting us young fellows, whether we deserve it or not."

"Well, I'm certainly not telling any lies in your case, Ned," insisted the scaler, good-naturedly.

"I hope I won't prove you a false prophet," said Burton. "Go right into the beaver house and thaw out. Put your horses in the right-hand hovel, Vede.



I expect they'll pull a little better if they get something to eat, won't they?"

"I gass wan bushel hay an' forkful oat put leetle geengar on dem," admitted the teamster.

"Sure, Mike!" assented Burton. "I'll speak to the cook and see you later," he added, as he hurried away to the cook's camp.

A little later Norman, in company with the scaler, Pelotte, and Burton, was washing down a hearty dinner of fried ham, boiled potatoes, hot biscuits, and mince pie, with a generous supply of steaming-hot tea, which he drank from a tin dipper.

"Well, where are you working now, Ned?" asked the scaler, as he helped himself to a second supply of ham and potato.

"You remember that low ridge where Bill Jason logged in '85?"

"Yes."

"Well, we're working along the south side of that at present."

"Mighty hard chance to get logs, isn't it?"

"About the worst I ever tackled. Have to buckle right down and jump to it. Reg'lar hog-wrestle all the time."

"Running small?"

"Taking 'most everything, down to a pickpole. The company has been to considerable expense in building roads for this camp, and my orders are to take 'em pretty clean."



"How many turns can you make a day from your yards to the landing?"

"About three."

"Well, you ought to get a good cut."

"I guess we'll be with 'em on the home stretch," declared Burton, with an accent of pride. "I've got a mighty good crew this winter. Only two or three poor ones in the bunch."

"You're lucky," said the scaler. "Still, I've noticed one thing—if there are any good men to be had, Harry McMurray usually gets them."

"They can't beat him," declared Burton. "He went to Bolton Monday, and I calculate he stopped over with Jim Cookson at the Beetle Brook camp last night."

"Mr. Carver is going to clerk for Billy Eustace," announced the scaler.

"I reckon he'll be glad to see him," rejoined Burton. "He's been tied altogether too closely to the camp this winter. Had to do 'most everything from filing saws to keeping the books and tending wangan."

"I don't see how he's managed it," declared Mr. Collins.

"He never could, if he'd had as much cruising to do as I've had," returned Burton.

"I don't believe I can help him out much on the saws," said Norman, as he followed Burton back into the beaver house.

"I don't know about that," replied Burton, with a smile. "You'll learn a heap from Billy."



Norman glanced keenly at the speaker, to determine if any hidden meaning lurked behind those words, but promptly acquitted Burton of any such subtle purpose.

Shortly after, the horses were again harnessed to the tote-sled, and they were once more on their way to Quadrate Lake.

Their road followed the winding valley of a big brook, which Mr. Collins stated was a tributary of Quadrate Lake, and would be used by the company in the spring to drive the logs from Camps 2 and 3 into its waters.

"It is called Gerrish Brook," explained the scaler, "in honor of Colonel Jim Gerrish — commonly known as 'Long Jim,' who cut big old-growth pine in this section back in the early fifties. By the way, there's one of them now," he added, as a swing round a curve in the road brought into view a mighty pine, whose straight trunk towered so high above the other trees of the forest, that the biggest of them were dwarfed in comparison.

"Old original growth," explained the scaler, briefly.

"A Gulliver among the Lilliputs!" exclaimed Norman, lost in admiration of the giant tree, whose tall top spread its scraggly branches full one hundred and fifty feet above the ground.

"Those kind of trees were all the lumbermen took in Colonel Gerrish's day," said Mr. Collins. "You'll see lots of the old pine stumps slowly rotting in this section, that will measure four and five feet in diameter.



They used to fell these mighty pines onto the largest trees about them to ease their fall. They were monarchs. I tell you when those big fellows came down they cut a mighty swath. You can stand by 'most any of these old pine stumps to-day and tell just where they fell by the line of smaller growth where the older trees were crushed and killed when the great pines came smashing and roaring down with a force that swept everything before them and fairly shook the earth."

"Why didn't the lumbermen take that one?" asked Norman, his eyes still viewing with fascinated wonder the majestic and graceful lines of the great tree.

"It was conky. See those brown circular patches on the side of its trunk?"

"Yes. They look like knots."

"They're not, though. They're conks — pine cancers — and from them a red rot extends into the heart of the tree, making it practically useless for timber purposes. Whenever you find a big pine like that in the Maine woods to-day, it's pretty safe to assume that it's not sound, otherwise it would have been cut long ago."

"It must have been dangerous getting them," suggested Norman.

"All lumber operations are attended with more or less danger," replied the scaler. "Civilization in its building operations makes heavy drafts upon the wilderness, and they are grudgingly paid through human toil. Sometimes, however, the forest makes quick and



terrible reprisals upon the unfortunate men within its reach."

"I'm glad some of these old-growth pines are still left, even if they are conky," said Norman. "I could never have imagined how they looked if I hadn't seen one with my own eyes."

"It's no wonder old Colonel Gerrish turned up his nose at spruce," said the scaler. "It was scarcely looked upon as a timber-tree in those days by men of his stamp."

"What sort of man was he?"

"A character; energetic, impulsive, pugnacious, and generous — a born leader of men. They still tell a good many stories about him in this section. Among the men who worked for him one winter was an Irishman named Pat Cardigan, a fellow of quick wit and somewhat stubborn nature. Some difference arose between him and Colonel Gerrish over a question of pay; and as the Colonel was accustomed to settle such matters by hob-nail methods, Pat decided to take French leave. He wisely chose for his departure a day when the Colonel was absent from camp. Before going, however, he sought to square his claim by going to the wangan and helping himself to a new pair of the long-legged cowhide boots much worn in those days. Arrayed in these, he started down the tote-road in the direction of home. He hadn't gone far, however, before, rounding a curve in the road, he came face to face with Colonel Gerrish. One glance revealed



to 'Long Jim' the true situation, and without a word he pounced upon Pat, like a cat on a mouse, and threw him upon his back in the snow. Then jumping astride one of the new boots, he started to pull it from the foot of the prostrate Cardigan. At this point Pat found his voice. 'Bedad,' said he, 'most iv'rything comes to a mon thot waits; but begorra it's not the loikes o' me thot iver expicted to have Colonel Jim Girrish fur a boot-jack!'

"The humor of the situation appealed to the Colonel. 'Pat,' he gasped, dropping the boot, 'start your boots down the road, and don't you ever let anyone know you met me.'

"Pat lost no time in acting upon the suggestion, and the Colonel continued on his way to camp, shaking with laughter. He considered the story too good to keep, however, and seemed to take a good deal of satisfaction in telling it at his own expense."

The scaler paused and smiled reflectively. "I was swamping for 'Long Jim,' as Colonel Gerrish was called, one winter," he said, "when he showed up at the camp with a black eye and a badly barked face.

"'Had an accident?' asked the boss.

"'No,' said he; 'had a little argument with black Steve Oliver down to his blacksmith shop. Called him a liar. Steve swore he'd sweep up the shop with me — and by ginger! he did!'"

"The Colonel must have been a scrapper," commented Norman.



“‘Jump right in,’ he insisted; ‘a little spin’ll do you good.’



"Upon that she left her work, somewhat reluctantly, and got into the wagon with him. What do you suppose that rascal did?"

"I haven't the slightest idea."

"He put for Bangor just as fast as he could go. His wife begged and pleaded in vain. He pushed right through the whole fifty miles and brought up at the Bangor House. His wife felt awfully chagrined and humiliated; but the Colonel squared it with her by buying the finest outfit they could find in the city."

"I shouldn't suppose that even that would have reconciled her," said Norman.

"Women are very forgiving — under such circumstances," declared the scaler. "Of course," he continued, "the Colonel was obliged at times to carry a good deal of money with him. Wages were paid in cash in those days instead of the time-bills that pass current all through the timber sections in these days. One day he was driving into one of his camps with a big wad of bills in his pocket, to be used in paying off his crew, when he overtook a rough-appearing fellow walking along the tote-road, and invited him to ride with him. No sooner was the man in the pung with him than the Colonel began to regret the hospitality he had shown him. He was a hard-looking ticket, with a villainous countenance; and the more 'Long Jim' looked him over the more unfavorable became his impression of him. Acting upon a sudden inspiration, he slyly dropped his whip into the tote-road.



Driving on a short distance, he pretended to discover its loss, and, hauling up, asked his companion to walk back and get it for him. The man promptly complied with the request; but, just as he reached the whip, the Colonel lashed his horse into a gallop with the ends of the reins, and left him standing there — about as astonished a man, I imagine, as there ever was in that township.”

Norman was about to comment upon the Colonel's strategy, when, pitching down a sharp hill, they emerged upon what appeared to be a big snow-covered plain surrounded by an unbroken forest of black growth.

“Quadrate Lake,” announced the scaler.

“I'd no idea it was so large,” said Norman.

“It's twelve miles long by four miles wide in the center. Camp 4 is on the opposite side of this bay, about a mile and a half from here. The clearing is in that black growth, about three hundred feet from the shore.”

The horses, conscious of the nearness of rest and shelter, broke into a brisk trot. A wind, cold and penetrating, swept boisterously up the long surface of the lake, and blew gusts of snow in their faces.

“Gets in on the marrow a little,” said Norman, with chattering teeth.

“Yes,” admitted the scaler, “and let me warn you right now never to try to cross this lake in its widest part, even if the day seems warm. I came across this



bay one night last winter when it seemed to me at times as if I should never reach camp. I was frequently obliged to stop and turn my back to the wind in order to catch my breath. I'm a pretty tough man, and have had considerable experience in the Maine woods, but I made up my mind right then and there that it was the last time I should ever try to cross any part of Quadrate Lake alone, and at night."

The sun was already dipping into the west, and the tall trees were beginning to cast their first faint shadows on the lake's surface, when Vede Pelotte drove his horses along a tree-fringed road up a gentle incline, and brought them to a standstill in the little clearing whose log huts and hovels made up the woods community known on the books of the Lakeland Lumber Company as Camp 4.



## CHAPTER IX

### NORMAN MAKES A NEW FRIEND

“Take your dunnage right into the beaver house,” said Mr. Collins, as Norman alighted from the tote-team and stretched his cramped limbs. The scaler pointed to the small log camp in front of which Vede Pelotte had stopped his horses. Norman promptly swung open the cleated board door, and carried the articles which constituted his “dunnage” within. It was a structure very similar to the beaver house in which he and the scaler had passed the night at Game-wood siding — save that it had but one room. In the end opposite the door was a good sized window, consisting of a single sash glazed with 9x13 panes. There was a similar window on the side of the camp to the right of the door, in front of which was a rough board table, holding a wide, wooden-jawed vise, which was evidently employed in filing the long saws used in cutting down trees. It was very apparent to Norman that these windows, which supplied the camp with a limited quantity of sunlight, had no part in its ventilation. This was left entirely to the doorway, the stove, and the small spaces between the logs where kindly winds had worn away the moss chinking.



"Looks a trifle stuffy, eh?" questioned the scaler, who had followed him into the camp in season to read his thought. "So it is, by spells," he added, in response to Norman's nod. "Still, you must always remember that logging-camps, under the most favorable conditions, are usually full of draughts. If they were not, the men who live in them would be in serious danger of stifling."

"While as it is they seem to have wonderfully good health and remarkable appetites," said Norman, with a smile. "I've already seen enough to be quite willing to take my chances."

"Well, there's some cedar kindling and birch-bark for you to start a fire with," said the scaler, pointing to the wood piled up beside the big Franklin stove that occupied the center of the room. "There's nearly an hour of daylight left," he continued, "and I think I'll improve it in taking a look at the landing near the camp. I noticed as I came along that they'd been hauling a few logs to it. If it were not for that, I'd start things going here."

"Please don't do anything for me that I can do for myself," protested Norman. "I want to be just as independent as I can."

"It won't take you long to learn the ropes," declared the scaler, with conviction, as he passed out of the camp.

Left alone, Norman resumed his inventory of the room. The window in the end wall was located exactly



in its center. Before it, was a large rough shelf made of box-boards, which, judging from the books and papers upon it, evidently served as the office-desk. From the under part of this shelf, suspended upon cleats, was a drawer made out of a tobacco-box the front of which still bore the inscription "Spearhead." A high log seat, similar to the one Norman had seen in the beaver house at Gamewood siding, stood before this "desk." On either side of the camp were located two rough bunks, one above the other, each of which was evidently capable of accommodating two men.

The walls of the camp, coming together in the corners, formed an end and side of each of these bunks, while boards eight inches wide, running at right angles and securely nailed to a vertical spruce pole, constituted the side and end projecting into the room. The floor served for the bottoms of the lower bunks, while the bottoms of the upper ones consisted of small poles placed side by side. In fact, the bunks were nothing more nor less than shallow boxes, placed one above the other, and filled with fir boughs over which were spread the coarse, heavy blankets that constituted the sole coverings. Altogether, they did not appeal to Norman as either clean or inviting. He had yet to learn the attractions of a bough bed for a wearied body.

At the foot of the bunks on one side of the camp were two immense boxes fitted with right-angle iron straps fastened to the top of the cover, and padlocked



to a staple on the front. To the right of the door was a rude sink, hollowed out of a spruce log, in which was a tin wash-basin. Above this sink hung a small cracked mirror, while at one end of it was a shelf upon which sat a wooden water-pail, and a partially used cake of ordinary laundry soap. A tin dipper, which hung upon a nail over the water-pail, was evidently the camp ladle and drinking-cup.

To the left of the door was a corner filled with a miscellaneous collection of chains, axes, snow-shoes, whiffletrees, horse-collars, several partially filled kegs of nails, a handsaw, a hammer, and half a dozen canvas extension-cases, which, doubtless, held the personal effects of the occupants. Several rifles and shot-guns hung from wooden hooks nailed to the logs just below the eaves. Scattered about the room were also half a dozen rude chairs which were obviously of camp make.

Having finished his inspection of the beaver house, Norman was about to go out when the door swung open to admit a tall, straight young man, who carried in his arms some fire-kindlings. The newcomer was clad in the leggings, moccasins, and heavy sweater which were beginning to grow familiar to Norman. He was apparently about seventeen years of age, straight and wiry of build, with clear-cut features, dark hair, and bright blue eyes that carried the effect of a smile and radiated an atmosphere of good-fellowship.



Norman was instantly attracted to him.

"Hello!" he said, cordially.

"Hello!" responded the newcomer, in a friendly tone. "Didn't know you were here, or I'd had this fire going before. Vede put up his horses, you know, before he came into the camp. My name is Fred Warner. I'm the cookee," he added, kneeling before the big stove and throwing open the door.

Norman looked at him closely, in some doubt as to how far it might be safe to trust him with his confidences. His observation only strengthened the favorable impression he had first formed of his new acquaintance.

"I'm awfully green," he confessed, frankly. "This is the first time I was ever in the big woods, and I've everything to learn. My name is Norman Carver, and I want you to help me, Fred."

"I'll do all I can for you," responded Warner, who, having lighted the fire, had closed the stove door and risen to his feet. "I guess, though, that you can teach me a heap more things than I can you. You see, I never had much schoolin'," he added, apologetically.

"I hope I may be able to help you a little somewhere, for I feel that you and I are going to be good friends," said Norman, warmly, holding out his hand.

"I reckon we are, too," agreed Fred, as he took the proffered hand in a hearty clasp.

"Now," said Norman, "I want you to tell me just what a cookee does in a logging-camp."



This request was evidently a surprise to Fred Warner, who gave Norman a quick, searching glance to assure himself that he was not being quizzed.

"It would be easier, I guess, to tell you what he doesn't do in this camp," he answered, with a smile, satisfied of Norman's sincerity. "I build the fires, wait upon the table, pour the tea, wash the dishes, lug the water, cut and lug the wood for all the fires, and call the men in the morning. When the crews are working near the camp I haul their lunches to them on a hand-sled at noon. There's only one crew that I do that for now. They are working, at the present time, on a ridge about a mile back from here. Before they started in there they were working only half a mile from camp, and hot yarding to the landing down on the lake-shore."

Norman looked at him in some bewilderment. "Go slowly, Fred," he protested. "One thing at a time, please. Now, first of all, what do you mean by yarding logs?"

"Why, that's dragging them from the places where the trees are cut, and making them into near-by piles beside a logging-road. You see, crews go into the woods to cut and yard, or pile up, logs months before the snow comes. Sometimes they go in as early as August. It is very necessary for them to pile up the logs, or, otherwise, they would be covered up later on, and lost in the deep snows, to say nothing of the inconvenience in hauling. The yards are made near



where the trees are cut, and the logs are dragged or twitched to them with horses. It is of course necessary to have a depth of snow sufficient to make good roads in order to move logs any great distance in the woods. The snows have been lighter than usual here this winter, so that we have been able to yard much longer than is generally the case. Last winter they had more than seven feet on the level."

"I fancy it would bother them some to dig logs out of that," commented Norman.

"Never'd get 'em in the world if they were not collected together and piled up on the yards," declared Fred.

"I think I understand what you mean by 'yarding,'" said Norman. "Now what do you mean by 'hot yarding'?"

"That is where one team drags logs to a yard and another hauls them directly to the landing. I have seen them rolling logs onto a side-hill yard from above, and loading them from below at the same time."

"Where logs are moved immediately to the landing, as you call it, that, I take it, is hot yarding."

"Not always. It would only be so when two different teams work on them. Sometimes, though, the trees are close enough at hand so the same team moves them from the stump to the landing. They call that 'dragging in.'"

"And the landing?"

"Oh, that's the place where they are piled up on the



shore of the lake or stream on which they are to be floated or driven to the mills when the ice goes out in the spring. We have two landings at this camp, both of them, of course, on the lake-shore."

"You spoke of crews," said Norman. "I thought a crew was all the men at work in one camp."

"That's so — in a way; but I meant yarding-crews," replied Fred. "For instance, there are now forty-six men in this crew. The boss, the clerk, the cook, the cookee, the toter, two men on each landing, thirty-seven men who are divided into five yarding-crews of seven men each, and two teamsters who are hauling to the landings. In each one of the yarding-crews, there are two sawyers, a sled-tender, two swampers — men who cut out the road — a teamster, and a yard-tender. Each one of these crews cuts and yards its own logs. It is one of these crews that I have to take the luncheon to at noon. I haul it out on a jumper."

"A jumper?"

"Yes — a skeleton hand-sled of camp manufacture."

"The swampers, you say, cut out the roads, and I think I might guess what the teamster does," said Norman; "but I should be somewhat in doubt about the others."

"Well, the sawyers undercut the tree and saw it down."

"What does it mean to undercut?"

"That is a notch they cut in the tree near the bottom before they begin to saw it down. It is this notch, or



undercut, that determines the place where the tree will strike when it falls. A good man can fell a tree about where he pleases. The undercut also prevents any slivering or splitting off on the trunk when the tree falls, as would be pretty sure to happen if it were cut wholly from one side. The sawyers, you know, always start their saws on the side of the tree opposite the undercut. The sled-tender takes the limbs off the tree, and cuts it off at the top. He lugs the drag-sled round when the team comes for it, and helps the teamster load it. The yard-tender has charge of the piling up of the logs. Each crew works on its own hook, independent of all the others. It's quite a hustle, I can tell you, to see which one will make the best showing."

"When you take out the noon lunch on your hand-sled, what do you carry?"

"Two big buckets. In one are biscuits and doughnuts and sweetbread; in the other, baked beans, hot from the oven. I also carry a bag containing tin dip-pers, plates, iron knives and spoons. In addition to all these things I take along a small jug of molasses. The men take tea with them. They build a fire at noon and make their tea over it in a big tin pot that holds ten quarts."

"They must have tremendous appetites," said Norman.

"Appetites!" repeated Fred. "Well, say, you wouldn't believe men could hold so much if you didn't see 'em stow it away. Our horses — big fellows they



are, too — are 'bout as bad. Each of 'em averages to eat a bushel of oats a day."

"I should think it would kill them," declared Norman.

"Well, it doesn't seem to, here — though I've heard Billy Eustace, our boss, say as how more horses are spoiled in the woods by overfeeding than are spoiled by hard work. He couldn't make the teamsters believe it, though. They think the more they can stuff into a horse, the better he'll stand it. Like to get a look at the camp?" he added, abruptly.

"Yes," admitted Norman.

"We'll have to be moving, then. Vede Pelotte's in the men's camp, and will keep the fire going there. I have to start it in season to get things warmed up before the boys get back. They always want a red-hot stove to thaw out by."

"It will soon be dark," said Norman, as he followed his companion out-of-doors.

"Yes. It begins to shut down here about four o'clock. That's the main camp," he continued, pointing to a long, low log structure which stood opposite the beaver house at a distance of about thirty feet. At first glance it looked to Norman like a long, peaked roof of easy slope projecting above the snow. Closer inspection, however, revealed two large log structures standing end to end about sixteen feet apart and covered with what appeared to be one continuous roof, about midway and at the further end of which pro-



jected short lengths of smoking stovepipe. This roof also covered the intervening space between the camps, which was closed on the back by logs placed side by side perpendicularly, and was open to the weather on the front, forming a shed for the housing of the camp grindstone, and the storing of beef, pork, frozen fish, and various other camp supplies.

"That's the dingle," explained Fred, pointing to this intervening shed. "The doors open from it into the ends of the two camps. The camp on the left is the men's camp, and the one on the right is the cook's camp. Those big log buildings to the left are the horse-hovels. The one facing the further end of the cook's camp is the blacksmith shop. The small one beyond the horse-hovels is the oat-house. That little camp beside the beaver house used also to be an oat-house, but they had it fixed over this winter for the use of the scalers. They've got a stove in there, and are as warm and cosy as a bear in a log."

"Do bears stay in logs?" questioned Norman, with a smile.

"Sometimes — when they're big and hollow," responded Fred, good-naturedly.

"The bears or the logs?"

"Both."

"Hello, there, Fred," called a voice from the beaver house.

"That's the boss, Billy Eustace," announced Fred. "You'd better go in with me and meet him."



Returning to the beaver house, they found the boss standing in the middle of the camp with a letter in his hand, looking visibly perplexed and worried. He was a tall, wiry-built man, whose slightly stooping shoulders bore testimony to years of hard work. His hair was long, and a scrubby growth of bristly black beard covered his face. His eyes were mild and blue, though the firm, set lines of his mouth indicated both a resolute spirit and tenacity of purpose.

"Where —" he began, as Fred came in — "er — who's this?" he added, with an abrupt change, catching sight of Norman.

"This is Norman Carver," announced Fred.

"Oh, yes; Mr. Ordway wrote me about you. Glad to see you," responded the boss, giving Norman a hearty shake of the hand and a quick, scrutinizing glance. "Sit down. Do you know, Fred," he added, turning to the cookee, "we're in a deuce of a scrape. Where did this letter come from?"

"Vede Pelotte just brought it."

"Did he tell you what was in it?"

"No. I don't think he knew."

"Well, it's a note from Dave Hardy, saying that his wife, with Mr. Seavey and his daughter Margie, expects to be here to-night about six o'clock. They are going to drive in from Aerie lake. Great smoke! This camp looks like a barn. You see," he explained to Norman, "I've been my own clerk so far this winter, and haven't had time to keep things slicked up much.



I swan, it's a pretty tough place for ladies to stay in. Call Vede," he added, turning to Fred. "Now, boys," he continued, when the cookee returned with the teamster, "just hustle these blankets into the scaler's camp. They're pretty bad — chock-full o' tobacco-smoke 'n' not particularly clean. Mighty glad I'm lucky enough to have a few extra ones on the bottom o' one of the wangan chests."

Norman assisted Fred and the teamster to lug the discarded bedding into the scaler's camp, from which they returned to find Eustace sweeping out the beaver house with a fury of zeal that had already enveloped him in a cloud of dust.

"Ka-chouch — aw — a — Ka — chah!" he sneezed. "Don't believe this blamed camp's been swept out all winter. Never expected to entertain ladies here — no, blessed if I did. Mighty lucky to have fresh boughs in them bunks. Deacon and Pokerface changed 'em over last Sunday. By gum! I reckon they'll have t' take things 'bout as they find 'em. Get a hustle there, boys!"

Norman and Vede hurried about under Fred's direction, putting things to rights, while Eustace, having completed his strenuous sweeping, unlocked and opened one of the big boxes in the room, from which he presently produced a pile of blankets.

"There, thet begins to look something like," he declared, in a tone of satisfaction, when he had spread them on the lower bunks. "Now I'll just fold up a



couple o' these new mackinaws for pillows, an' everything 'll be as snug as a bug in a rug. We're a trifle shy o' purple an' fine linen here at Camp 4 this winter; but I reckon they'll survive. Sorry for you, Carver," he added, turning to Norman. "I'd planned on your sleeping here in the beaver house; but you'll have to bunk in with Fred in the men's camp while the women are here. Got room in your bunk, haven't you, Fred?"

"I guess we can squeeze in all right," returned the cookee.

"I'll bet you can, an' sleep warmer for it," said the boss, approvingly. "You see, boys, the minister's coming t' supper, an' we've got to have the wood-chuck."

"Will you need us any further?" asked Fred.

"No, I think not."

"Well, come over to the big camp with us, Norman. The cook will be on my trail if I don't get to work with him, so I'll leave you in Vede's care in the men's camp till supper-time. I'll have a place all saved out for you at one of the tables."

The cookee turned to the right as they entered the dingle, while Norman followed Vede Pelotte through the doorway on the left, and entered the quarters specially reserved for and dedicated to the men who formed the bone and sinew of the camp's crew.



## CHAPTER X

### CHARACTERISTICS OF CAMP 4

Norman's first impression of the men's camp was one of disappointment. It was distinctly stuffy and, even in the dim light, looked anything but clean. The floor was made of hewn logs which did not fit closely together at the sides, and upon which he found it somewhat difficult to maintain an even footing. It was stained with tobacco-juice, and its gaping cracks had gradually filled with a well-packed accumulation of dirt. Near the door of the camp, in the front part of the big room, was an enormous box stove, whose red-hot sides sent out a glow of heat that seemed fully capable of subduing the various cold draughts that steadily forced their way into the apartment from the outside world to do battle with it. The efficacy of this stove was further enhanced by a long funnel that ran from it nearly to the bunks that extended across the end of the camp, assisting it materially in the distribution of its warmth.

This funnel was suspended about midway of the roof peak, by means of wire cut from bales of pressed hay — an article which, as Norman soon learned, fills a very important part in the economy of a logging-



camp. Starting from the front of the stove, two poles — one on either side — extended the entire length of the funnel, being suspended at the ends by lengths of hay wire attached to the roof. A few pairs of heavy woolen leggings and mittens hung from these poles, indicating the drying purposes to which they were dedicated. Up the slant of the roof long logs — or ribs — extended at intervals of three or four feet from one end of the camp to the other, forming the framework upon which the roof was nailed. What appeared to be narrow boards had been used for covering in these ribs, but so rough and splintery were they that Norman felt convinced that they could never have come from a sawmill.

“Dem cedarre spleet,” said Vede Pelotte, noting his perplexity.

“What?” asked Norman, in still greater uncertainty.

“He said they were cedar splits,” explained the scaler, who had entered the camp in season to hear Vede’s statement. “They are a kind of board split out of cedar logs by the use of wooden mauls, and a wedge-like tool called a froe. All logging-camp roofs were once covered with splits; but in these days a large part of them are roofed with sawed boards and tarred paper. The going was so soft when these camps were built that it was thought best to use splits — which make a fairly tight roof when carefully laid. These are the deacon seats,” continued Mr. Collins,



pointing to some rough benches made of heavy planks hewn from logs which extended across the end of the camp and part way down the sides in front of the bunks. "There's where the men sit to smoke their pipes, spin their yarns, and sing their songs on Sundays, and before they go to bed at night. It is the social center of camp life."

Norman looked somewhat askance at the rough benches, beneath which was a dingy collection of well-worn larrigans, moccasins, and lumbermen's rubbers. He found it difficult to persuade himself that anyone could take any real comfort on the uneven surface of such rude seats, where there was neither spring nor back; but he forbore to comment.

Across the further end of the camp extended a big double-decked bunk. The camp floor formed the bottom of the lower deck, a log extending in front of it on top of the floor from one side of the camp to the other, serving to make a bay for holding in place the fine fir boughs upon which the heavy blankets were spread. It was only about four feet from the lower bunk to the upper one, the bottom of which was made by small spruce poles placed side by side over big log stringers, extending from one side of the camp to the other. These stringers were cut into the camp logs at the end, and were supported at intervals by big log posts extending to the floor. A large log extended from side to side of the camp over the ends of the small floor-poles which were nearest the stove, and served,



like the one on the camp floor below, to form a bay for the upper bunk. The top bunk was one continuous blanket-covered bough bed, the men sleeping side by side under a continuous line of blankets with their feet toward the stove. The lower bunk was divided off by partitions, many of them lined with sheathing-paper, and capable of affording sleeping accommodations for from two to six men. These compartments looked to Norman like a row of low-studded horse-stalls. Similar stall-like bunks had also been built upon a much smaller scale against the side walls of the camp at right angles with the large ones across the end of the camp; being rendered necessary, as the scaler explained, to provide for the larger crew which had been employed for yarding operations earlier in the season.

“Can a man —” Norman paused abruptly in some embarrassment.

“Keep clean in such surroundings?” interposed the scaler, completing the question. “He can, in a large measure, if he really wants to. He will, of course, have to sleep in his clothes. All the men do that; but he can scald out two or three sets of underwear and a few pairs of socks every Sunday if he is willing to take the trouble. He can also take precautions that will keep his bunk free from vermin, the prevalence of which varies in different camps. There are usually some men in 'most every logging-crew who scarcely trouble to change their clothing all winter. It takes about two weeks of daily duckings on the spring drive



to get such fellows even passably clean. You'll have no trouble with Fred Warner. He's a nice clean fellow, physically and morally. I'll wager his bunk is well fenced and free from danger."

Norman looked relieved. His eye traveled over the canvas extenders, and looped grain-bags, hanging from nails driven into the roof-ribs which contained the extra clothing and personal effects of the crew. It was evident that very little room in the camp was permitted to go to waste.

The night settled down rapidly upon the deep woods. The waning sunlight streamed more and more dimly through the diminutive panes of the two small windows that lighted the camp in the daytime — one at the end above the top bunks, the other on the side. Lengthening shadows crept along the camp floor. The scaler and Vede Pelotte lighted the two kerosene lamps with big tin reflectors that were fastened to the camp-walls, and the half-dozen lanterns that were suspended by hay wire from the roof-ribs in various parts of the big room.

The tote-teamster had employed so much of his time in crowding big sticks of wood into the capacious stove, that the temperature of the camp had grown so hot as to be almost unbearable; and Norman, eager to get a breath of fresh air, passed out into the well-beaten roadway in front of the dingle. A strange and solemn hush had fallen upon the big woods. A few belated bird-voices sounded sleepily from the dark coverts.



The tall spruces and hemlocks lifted spectral arms into the deepening twilight, and a rising breeze sang soft and solemn dirges up and down the forest aisles. Presently along the surrounding wood-roads came the distant sound of bells, which grew louder and nearer until their clamorous notes mingled with the voices of men, and the clank of dragging chains.

The men and teams were returning from their day's work. Norman turned and re-entered the camp. He seated himself on the deacon seat, and awaited with some interest the coming of the crew. The first to put in an appearance was Sol Soc, the big Indian whose life he had saved on the train in the trip to Gamewood siding. The impassive face of the red man betrayed neither surprise nor pleasure at seeing him there.

"How do?" he grunted.

"How do you do?" returned Norman, cordially.

"When come?"

"This afternoon."

"Good."

The big Indian went to the wood-pile and selected from among the kindlings there a long pine splinter. Seating himself upon the deacon seat, he drew a big hunting-knife from a hip-pocket, and, opening it, proceeded to whittle a sharp edge on either side of the stick in his hand, after which he used it to carefully scrape away the snow that clung to his leggings. This done, he removed his moccasins and placed them near the roaring stove. Following this, he removed his



sweater and leggings and hung them, together with a heavy pair of home-knit mittens, over one of the drying-poles. He then fished a pair of dry moccasins from the pile under the deacon seat and put them on his feet, after which he passed to the log trough that stood near the door and served for a camp sink. Pouring a dipper of water into one of the tin wash-basins, he carefully washed his face and hands, combed his hair before the small cracked mirror that hung on the wall, and seated himself again on the deacon seat.

"Always a little ahead of the procession, Sol," said the scaler, genially.

"Li'l bit — som'time," admitted the Indian, laconically.

There was a tramp of feet into the dingle. The door swung open on its creaking hinges, and a crowd of men in moccasins and leggings came surging into the camp. Soon the room was filled with men. Strangely silent and observant these strong, weather-beaten workers appeared to Norman, who had expected to find them something like an exuberant crowd of schoolboys out for recess. They moved about the camp with the mechanical quickness and directness with which men come to do a similar and oft-repeated task. Heavy clothing was removed, scraped or shaken free from ice or snow, and hung upon the dry-poles, after which the men crowded about the rude sink. There was a subdued eagerness in their hurried preparations for supper, and much of their conversation was



carried on with monosyllabic brevity. There were, it is true, occasional attempts at rude jest and repartee, sometimes coarse in tone and prefaced with oaths, but as a whole the crowd was neither a noisy nor a loquacious one. At the same time, Norman came in for friendly nods, and it was evident that the men were not lacking in a spirit of good-fellowship.

Soon a double row of damp larrigans, moccasins, and lumbermen's rubbers were standing about the roaring stove, while the drying-poles bent low beneath the heavy pile of soggy clothing heaped upon them.

Quickly, methodically, and in pairs, the members of the crew performed their hasty but strenuous toilets at the camp sink, whose accommodations were limited to two at a time. A little later, responding to the call of the cookee, they trooped, with glistening hair and glowing faces, across the dingle to their places about the primitive supper-tables in the cook's camp.

Norman and the scaler lingered behind.

"They're a ravenous crowd," declared Mr. Collins, with a laugh, "and I calculate our chances will be just as good if we give them time to work off the raw edge of their appetites."

"I guess I'll improve the opportunity to wash up," said Norman. Stepping to the sink, he filled the tin dipper from the pail of water which one of the men had brought in a moment before. He emptied it into a wash-basin, and paused abruptly.



"Anything wrong?" asked the scaler, noting his hesitation.

"This water's full of little bits of ice."

The scaler smiled indulgently.

"It's pretty sure to be where it's dipped from a water-hole cut through the ice," he explained.

"Was this the kind of water the others washed in?"

"The very same."

"Then I reckon I can stand it," declared Norman. He turned to the sink and picked up the cake of laundry-soap that had done duty for the crew, gazed askance at it for a moment, and laid it down in disgust.

"Dirty?" asked the scaler.

"Just a bit," admitted Norman.

The scaler looked at him with a gleam of amusement in his eyes. "I was waiting to see how you'd take these hurdles," he confessed. "I always make it a practice in camp to use the first basinful of water for washing the soap. Perhaps, however, this will help you out," he added, handing him a small cake of toilet-soap.

"It's a perfect Godsend," declared Norman.

He briskly scrubbed his face and hands in the ice-cold water, wet his hair, and turned to the roller-towel that hung upon the wall. He dropped it at once, fished a handkerchief from his pocket, dug the soapy water from his eyes, and gazed aghast at the section of rough



crash he had been about to use. It was almost as black as a hat, and fairly caked with dirt.

"Couldn't see it with your eyes shut — could you?" asked the scaler.

"No," admitted Norman, "but I could smell it."

"It does come pretty near being the limit," assented the scaler. "It was clean, though, when those fellows started in on it. I suppose you have some towels in your extender?"

"Yes. Mr. Ordway had me bring a dozen."

"It will be all right to use them in the beaver house; but while you're in here you'd better plan to get the first run on the roller, or stay behind and worry along with your handkerchief. The men are apt to be a little prejudiced if they think a newcomer is fastidious or trying to put on style."

"I don't see how Fred Warner stands it," declared Norman.

"He doesn't have to," explained the scaler. "He has a chance to do his washing up in the cook's camp."

Norman finished wiping himself with his handkerchief, and, taking a small comb from his pocket, carefully combed his hair before the small, cracked, and somewhat foggy mirror.

"Got your own comb, I see," laughed the scaler.

"Yes — thanks to Mr. Ordway."

"Well, I've no doubt he's fitted you out with about all the things you'll need, when you get a chance to



use them," declared the scaler, as he led the way across the dingle into the cook's camp.

To his surprise and relief, Norman found this camp a decided improvement upon the one occupied by the men. The floor was made of boards, and, like other parts of the camp, was scrupulously clean. One end of the big room was occupied by a big cooking-range, a cooking-bench, and a number of shelves piled high with boxes of supplies. Long rough tables extended across the opposite side of the room. These were covered with oilcloth. The men sat up to them on rough benches made of hewn logs, similar to the deacon seats, and the steady rattle of iron knives and forks upon tin dishes attested the vigor with which they were enjoying the meal. There was very little conversation, and even this was carried on with marked brevity and in subdued tones. It was apparently an eating match, in which every competitor felt the necessity of attending strictly to business.

Fred Warner, who was busily engaged in filling pint dippers with steaming tea from an enormous tin pot, nodded to them as they entered the camp, and pointed to some vacant seats at a table in the corner. Sol Soc was already there, and gave Norman and the scaler a mere grunt of recognition as they took their places. They had barely seated themselves before two newcomers entered the camp and took the vacant seats opposite them. Norman was surprised to recognize the familiar faces of Pete Bedotte and Jud Skinner —



the latter looking decidedly subdued after his harrowing experience at Gamewood siding.

The big Frenchman was obviously delighted to see them again, and fairly beamed upon them.

"Bonjour, M'sieu Carvarre! Bonjour, M'sieu Colleens!" he exclaimed, heartily. "Ba golly, eet ban good for see you on top dees place."

"We're glad to see you, Pete," responded the scaler, cordially; "but how does it happen you're late to supper? Haven't lost your appetite, have you?"

"Ba golly, I gass not — me," said the big Frenchman, with a laugh. "Ma beeg black hoss cut heemse'f on her foot. I stay leetle while for feex her. I gass she ban all rat now."

"Still mindful of your team, I see," said the scaler. "I'll bet you have the best one in camp."

"Dey ban prattee fair hoss, I t'ink," admitted the teamster, with an accent of pride. "Dey bote ban jus' so fat lak wan leetle mouse. I feed dem plaintee oat an' hay when dey ban hongree."

"I'll warrant you do," acquiesced the scaler. "When did you get along?" he asked, turning to Skinner.

"Just a few minutes ago."

"You started out ahead of us this morning, and I thought we should pick you up on the road."

"I stopped a while at Camp 2. Reckon you must have passed me there," responded Skinner.

The remainder of the meal was passed in compara-





THE MEN SAT UP TO THEM ON ROUGH BENCHES. — Page 127.







tive silence, no one appearing much inclined to engage in conversation.

The hot biscuit, well spread with butterine, the cold fresh pork, the hot baked beans, swimming in fat, and the steaming tea, colored with condensed milk and sugared to taste, aroused an unexpectedly sharp appetite in Norman, and when he left the table it was with the conviction that he had done full justice to the repast.

As he paused for a moment in the dingle after leaving the cook's camp, he heard the jingle of bells and the sound of women's voices in front of the beaver house. It was evident that the expected visitors had put in an appearance.

"I must leave you now, Norman," said Mr. Collins, who had followed closely behind him. "I am going to sleep in the scalers' camp. I should have been glad to have swapped with you, only I felt that it might be well, perhaps, for you to see something of the crew."

"That's what I want to do," said Norman. "Besides, I wouldn't consent for a moment to turn you out of your bed."

"I'm an old-timer in the woods, my boy," returned the scaler, "and can make myself at home 'most anywhere."

"I hope to learn how to do that myself."

"And I have no doubt you will," declared the scaler, with conviction. "Good-night."

"Good-night."



For a moment after Mr. Collins had left him, Norman stood looking out upon the stars that glimmered coldly in the blue sky above the tree-tops. A new life was opening up to him — a life so different from any he had ever imagined that he felt like pinching himself to make sure that he was not dreaming. Already he was beginning to appreciate some of the hardships involved in it; but he assured himself that he would meet them manfully, and do his best to fulfil the requirements of his position. In the strength of this resolution he turned and re-entered the men's camp.



## CHAPTER XI

### NORMAN BECOMES AN ENTERTAINER

No sooner had the door closed behind him than Norman became uncomfortably conscious that he was undergoing the scrutiny of a score or more of curious eyes. An immediate hush had fallen upon the conversation, and every man present seemed to have entered into a contest to see which one of them would be the first to stare him out of countenance. Even a group of men seated on some blankets, in the big central compartment of the long lower bunk, and engaged in the absorbing pastime of swapping watches, by the dim light of a lantern, promptly suspended business and peered out at him with an intensity of interest that was decidedly disconcerting.

He was unaware of the fact that his rescue of Sol Soc, who despite his taciturn ways was a favorite with the crew, had already preceded him to Camp 4, where big Pete Bedotte, blessed with a vivid imagination, had made sure that it lost nothing in the telling. Nowhere does the quality of courage command greater homage than in a logging crew; and Norman, without knowing why, was conscious that the looks cast in his direction were of a most friendly nature.



"Ba Joe, I ban ver' glad for see you," said Pete Bedotte, coming forward from the deacon seat and shaking him warmly by the hand. "Boys," he announced, with an impressive wave of his hand, "dis heem, M'sieu Carvarre, de leetle fellaire w'at I ban tole you 'bout."

"How are ye?" "Glad t' see ye;" "Bonjour;" "Bonjour," came in chorus of salutation from the members of the crew.

"Seet down, M'sieu Carvarre," continued Pete, pointing to an open space on the deacon seat. "Jus' mak' youse'f rat on home."

With a murmur of thanks, Norman took the indicated seat beside the big Frenchman, and gazed with intense interest, and some diffidence, upon the strange scene about him. Mackinaws, leggings, sweaters, and other articles of clothing, responding to the compelling heat of the red-hot stove, were sending up from the crowded drying-poles clouds of steam, acrid with the reek of perspiration. Rows of larrigans, moccasins, and lumbermen's rubbers simmered on the floor at a safe distance from the fire. A few men, reclining at length on the bunks, were reading by lantern-light, either yellow-covered novels or the newspapers and letters which had been brought to the camp by Vede Pelotte. By far the greater number, however, sat on the deacon seats about the big stove. Many were industriously puffing black looking pipes, chiefly corn-cobs, and filling the overheated atmosphere with a



suffocating assortment of evil smelling tobacco-smoke. Those of the crew on the deacon seat who were not smoking were chewing, either spruce gum or tobacco, and Norman noted with amazement their astonishing feats of expectoration in the direction of the glowing stove. In a corner by the sink two men were busily engaged in sharpening an axe on the grindstone which they had brought in from the dingle. One stood upon the frame with the axe in both hands, forcing its edge upon the stone by holding his knee against the back side of it, while the other patiently turned the handle. The men, having discarded their outer garments, exhibited a variegated assortment of flannel shirts in which blue and red were the prevailing colors. Some wore belts, but the sweat stains on their backs still showed the outlines of suspenders. Nearly every member of the crew was perspiring freely; but not one of them suggested ventilation, all, apparently, being impressed with the necessity of storing up sufficient heat to last them through the night. Through the accumulation of abominable smells pervading the camp came, like a saving grace, the aromatic and dominating scent of the fir boughs that filled the bunks. It was an atmosphere found nowhere else in the world — an atmosphere indescribable and inconceivable, save to those who have spent a midwinter evening in a Maine logging-camp.

To Norman, accustomed to sleep in a well-ventilated room, the situation seemed almost intolerable; but he



chewed grimly upon the cud of spruce gum with which Pete Bedotte had provided him, fully resolved to meet the conditions of his new life without weakness and without complaint.

He found himself listening with interest to the conversation about him, which appeared for the time to be dominated by one Jim Benner, a tall, raw-boned Yankee, with a rough, weather-beaten face, deeply pitted from smallpox. It was evident that Benner had seen a great deal of experience in the woods and on the drive, and that his opinions carried weight with the crew.

"Reg'lar ole Hessian — ole Jim is," whispered Jud Skinner, who sat at Norman's left. "Stronger 'n a moose; hard es nails; ruther 'd scrap 'n eat. Bossed a crew of his own once. Booze floored 'im."

"How did ye ever manage t' lodge thet big spruce? We sort o' expect better o' Pierre Daviau," said the oracle, addressing a short, thick-set Frenchman who was smoking near him.

"Ma gosh! I don' can tell — me," was the reply. "Dat tree play me wan ver' smart treeck. I was t'ink she ban undercut so she fall rat out nice an' clear wit' beeg end for road. Monjee! when she ban ready for fall she ac' jus lak she ban crazee. She jomp on stomp. She sweeng rat roun', she fall rat on dat beeg hemlock. Sapre! She steeck ver' fas'. It was get for dark, so I lef' heem."

"I reckon you can tie a warp an' pull her off in the



mornin’,” responded old Jim, encouragingly; “but even then you’re goin’ t’ leave her in a nasty place t’ git out. Th’ main thing in gittin’ trees is t’ have ’em felled right. I’d a durn sight ruther take a tree standin’ then t’ hev it badly felled.”

“I guess dat ban so,” admitted Pierre. “Ba Joe! I t’ink I’d lak jus’ wan game pokerre,” he added, with an evident desire to change the subject.

A murmur of assent greeted this suggestion.

“I s’pose,” said old Jim, reflectively, surveying the group with a critical eye, “thet ye feel ’s if Harry McMurray was a trifle hard on ye, a-shuttin’ off singin’ an’ hoss-play on Sundays, ’n’ a-squelchin’ booze ’n’ card-playin’ et all times; but I’m a-tellin’ on ye he’s jest right, boys — dead right. I’ve run a crew myself, ’n’ I know it’s bis’ness. Card-playin’s sartin sure t’ stir up a rumpus in a crew. Even when the men play fer fun some on ’em git riled, an’ where they play fer money there’s bound t’ be bad blood all round sooner or later. When men git t’ playin’ cards in a loggin’-camp there’s many a dull axe es doesn’t git ground, an’ many a hoss es doesn’t git decent care. I had a crew over on Sebois waters one winter thet got fairly daft on cards. So much so thet th’ temsters got t’ neglectin’ of their hosses. Two or three teams got well-nigh wuthless. I jest made up my mind t’ put a stop to it, so one night I hung ’em right up in the midst o’ their play. I told ’em their hosses was showin’ th’ result o’ their neglect, ’n’ while they owned their



teams the fact remained that they were not a-keepin' of 'em in shape t' do decent work for me. They denied it, up hill 'n' down; but, by hemlock! I wouldn't knuckle to 'em. I jest picked up a lantern 'n' told every man jack on 'em t' come out t' the hovel with me. They didn't ary one on 'em want t' come, but I made 'em. We found a row o' hosses standin' there with their legs all ice, 'n' not a blamed bit o' provender in their cribs. You bet them fellers didn't hev very much t' say. I told 'em right then 'n' there — 'n' told 'em emphatical — es how there wouldn't be no more card-playin' in my camp thet winter — 'n' there wasn't. I tell ye it made a mighty lot o' diff'runce in the work I was able t' git out o' thet crew. No sir-ee, no cards in mine."

Nods of approval showed that the men were impressed with the force of old Jim's logic.

"They say es how Harry McMurray's father hed them same idees," suggested Jud Skinner.

"He did," assented old Jim. "I knew Jeff McMurray well. Lumbered with 'im one winter over on Chesuncook. He was a peculiar man, but a good logger — 'n' square's a brick. I remember he 'n' me got in to supper after the others were all through one night. While we was eatin' a young feller who hed got delayed somehow or other come in an' sot down nigh th' foot o' th' table. There was a heapin' plate o' molasses doughnuts jest in front on 'im, 'n' he preceded t' fill up on 'em. He et all but one on 'em



afore he stopped to take a good full breath, after which he sort o' hesitated a minute 'n' then he reached out 'n' took thet last doughnut; broke it in two, put one half back on th' plate 'n' et t'other. Jeff was a-watchin' on 'im all th' time outer th' corners of his eyes, 'n' I could see he was gittin' mighty hot; but he never said a word to 'im till the youngster got up t' leave th' table — then he opened on 'im. 'By th' Jim Hill!' says he; 'you've sot there 'n' et a whole meal o' doughnuts; but by mighty! you'll never eat another doughnut in my camp!' — 'n' he never did, for Jeff slid 'im out th' very next mornin' 'n' there wasn't no doughnuts for breakfast."

"Let's have a song or two, boys," suggested a tall, dark-complexioned man, who had, hitherto, been a silent listener to the conversation.

"Hooraw! Whoop-er-up, ole man," came the approving shout from the members of the crew.

Thus admonished, the proposer of the song — who, Norman subsequently learned, was Ike Tapley, the camp blacksmith, familiarly known as "Pokerface" — cleared his throat and piped up valiantly, in thin, nasal tones that made up in penetration what they lacked in melody, as follows:

"Oh-h-h give me a pipe o' good black plug

With the gang on the deacon row,

And little I care for the cold without

Where the wintry winds do blow.

Then tune up the fiddle,

And dance down the middle,



Come drive dull care away!  
Whoop-er-up and sing—  
Make the camp-ribs ring—  
Let's frolic while we may!"

The men came in with a roar of enthusiasm on the chorus, beating out the time on the floor with their feet. Tapley evidently had a number of more verses in reserve, and was about to start another, when he was interrupted by Pete Bedotte, who had apparently found inspiration in the words of the chorus.

"You get musique — you play fidelle?" he asked, excitedly.

"No," confessed Norman, to whom this question was addressed. "I pound a banjo a little, but I don't know anything about a fiddle."

"De banjo! Hooraw!" shouted big Pete, fairly jumping up and down in an ecstasy of satisfaction. "Jomp on you foot, Baptiste!" he added, addressing a small, dark-eyed young Frenchman who sat near him. "Ronne queek for fetch dat banjo."

Norman's look of consternation was promptly noted by old Jim Benner, and it brought a smile of amusement to his rugged features.

"You can find 'most anything in a lumber-camp — et a pinch," he said. "We hed a feller here the fust of the season who was a consider'ble big herb with a banjo. If he'd be'n able t' done half es good a turn in th' woods he'd probably hev held down his job. When he left, the boys chipped in 'n' bought his banjo, callatin' to hev Baptiste Groder — who butchers the



fiddle a little — pick it up; but somehow he doesn't jest seem t' hev got th' hang on it."

When Baptiste, duly impressed with the importance of his mission, scrambled down from the upper bunk with the banjo, he was followed by every man in the camp who was not already on the deacon seats. Those who were not able to find places on the rude benches dangled their legs in a row from the top of the long end bunk. Fred Warner, having finished his work in the cook's camp, also joined the audience. There was a look of expectancy on every face, and Norman could not help a feeling of embarrassment at this unlooked-for prominence into which his careless disclaimer had brought him. Fortunately he was a more than average player upon the banjo, and the instrument which had been so unexpectedly thrust into his hands was a fairly good one. After a moment spent in tuning up, he struck suddenly into the stirring strains of Sousa's "El Capitan" march. In a moment, nearly every man in the camp was beating out the time with his foot, the rhythmic thud of moccasins upon the floor having almost the effect of a muffled drum. As the music proceeded some of the crew, especially the Frenchmen, followed its time also with swaying bodies. Finishing the march, Norman struck up a lively jig-tune, and, unable further to restrain their enthusiasm, a number of the men went dancing in pairs up and down the rough and limited floor-space behind the stove. As the jig came to an end and the perspiring



dancers sought places upon the deacon seats, Norman was greeted with a clapping of hands, and, lifting a startled glance, perceived four people, whose entrance he had not observed, standing near the camp door. Two of them he recognized as Billy Eustace and Mrs. Hardy. The other two he knew must be Mr. Seavey and his daughter.

With flushed face, Norman rose to his feet and laid the banjo down upon the deacon seat. He felt decidedly abashed and uncomfortable; but Billy Eustace quickly relieved the restraint by stepping forward and introducing Mr. Seavey — a pleasant-faced man, somewhat past middle life, who shook hands with him cordially.

“I see you’ve already won your way with the men,” he said, with a smile. “Now let me present you to my daughter Margie.”

“Oh, Mr. Carver! I do hope you are not going to stop,” exclaimed the young lady, as she gave him her hand.

Norman was not too confused to perceive that she was dark-haired, dark-eyed, fair-complexioned and distinctly pretty. Ordinarily, he was a self-possessed young man in the presence of ladies, but now he felt, in his diffidence, that he was blushing furiously.

“Really — you see — I — I didn’t know — that — that —” he stammered, awkwardly.

“That you had ladies in the audience?” interposed Miss Seavey, laughingly. “Really, Mr. Carver, I



think we owe you an apology for the unceremonious way we came in upon you; but my father assured us that ladies would never see the members of a logging-crew engaged in a camp dance unless they came upon them unawares."

"That's so," reiterated Mr. Seavey. "You have just witnessed a sight not often vouchsafed to women."

"I have been a victim of circumstances," explained Norman, who had recovered some degree of self-possession. "I was indiscreet enough to admit that I drummed a little on the banjo, never dreaming that there was one in the camp, and the first thing I knew they had provided an instrument and drafted me into service."

"And I think they are to be congratulated on their discovery," declared Miss Seavey, with enthusiasm. "I wouldn't have missed this performance for anything."

"You certainly have no reason to feel ashamed of your part in it," added her father, heartily. "Really, you play exceedingly well."

"Thank you," said Norman.

"I don't suppose there's any way to get the men dancing again, is there?" asked Miss Seavey, regretfully.

"No," replied Eustace, with conviction. "You couldn't drag them onto that floor with an ox-team."

"But surely you'll play one or two more selections for us," pleaded the young lady.



"Please do, Mr. Carver," added Mrs. Hardy.

"Well, if you think you can stand this atmosphere," replied Norman.

"It is a trifle able-bodied," admitted Mr. Seavey.

"Oh, don't you worry about us," interposed the young lady, eagerly. "We'd just love to hear you."

The members of the party seated themselves in some rude chairs — the only ones the camp boasted — which several of the men had hastened to bring from the beaver house, while Norman picked up the banjo and resumed his place on the deacon seat. Several selections were played in quick succession — the members of the crew preserving a solemn and decorous silence.

"We are certainly very much indebted to you, Mr. Carver," said Miss Seavey, as she bade Norman good-night, "and we should be very glad to have you take breakfast with us in the morning."

"Thank you," replied Norman, "I shall be pleased to."

Following the departure of their guests, the members of the crew began to retire for the night. Blankets were smoothed out, and, one after another, the weary men removed their moccasins, and went to bed fully dressed and in their stockings.

"Here is our nest," said Fred Warner, as he led Norman to a stall-like lower bunk which stood at right angles with the big one which extended across the end of the camp. "One thing is certain," he added: "This bedding is fairly clean, for I washed it out last



Sunday. Some of it in this camp hasn't seen water all winter."

Norman crawled in under the blankets beside his companion, in some doubt as to his prospects for sleep. Already the discordant snores, and heavy, regular breathing of some of the men, showed that they were enjoying the deep and dreamless slumber that comes to wearied bodies.

A moment later Billy Eustace entered the camp. "Nine o'clock," he announced; and going about the room, he blew out the lights, leaving the camp enveloped in darkness.

"My! but this is hot," whispered Norman to Fred Warner, as he rolled about on his bough bed in a vain endeavor to find a spot where one unruly and persistent bough would not invade his backbone.

"I'll fix that," rejoined Fred, and, suiting the action to the word, he reached his hand over his head, and a moment later Norman felt a grateful current of cool, fresh air pouring into the bunk.

"Where does that come from?" he whispered.

"Sh-h-h," warned Fred. "I took the opportunity when the men were gone to bore a two-inch auger-hole through the side of the camp. I close it up with a plug and hang an old cap over it in the daytime."

"Aren't you afraid of getting cold?"

"No. Colds are very rare in the woods, and sore throats are practically unknown. Let me know when you get enough, and I'll close the ventilator."



It seemed to Norman as if a thousand weird and mournful voices were sighing among the big, wind-swept trees. Once he sat bolt upright when an ominous hoot echoed through the forest; but lay back again in disgust when Fred explained to him that it was only an owl. The sound of some animal racing about on top of the camp aroused him again just as he was dozing off to sleep.

"What's that?" he demanded, nervously, giving his bunk-mate a dig in the ribs.

"It's a squirrel," whispered Fred, sleepily. "They sound as big as wildcats when they get on a roof at night."

Once more Norman was finding his way to dream-land when he was aroused by the dolorous creaking of the camp door which opened to admit a belated teamster. He had not noticed its failings during the day; but now it seemed suddenly vocal with all the mournful spirits of the wilderness. It was an uncanny thought; but in spite of it, tired nature finally asserted itself, and Norman dropped as fast asleep as any of the crew.



## CHAPTER XII

### THE FELLING OF THE HEMLOCK

Norman was awakened the following morning by Fred Warner's voice shouting "Five o'clock! Turn ou-u-u-t!" at the camp door.

Instantly the camp was all commotion. The men, yawning and stretching, came crawling out of the bunks to find places on the deacon seats around the big stove, in which a fire, kindled by the cookee, was already under good headway. Lamps were lighted, for it was still dark; leggings and moccasins were put on, and the members of the crew gathered about the log sink for their morning ablutions. The camp door creaked dismally on its wooden hinges, as it was opened and shut by men going and coming. Teamsters, who had risen an hour earlier to feed and care for their horses at the hovels, came straggling back into the camp with lanterns on their arms, rough jokes and repartee were interchanged, and the whole scene was suddenly transformed into one vibrant with life and animation.

It seemed to Norman that he had been asleep for only a few minutes, and he found some difficulty in persuading himself that it was really morning. He was



astonished, too, that Fred Warner had been able to get up and dress without his knowing it. The rough but hearty salutations of the men convinced him that his last evening's performance had put him upon a friendly footing with the crew. Seated upon the deacon seat, he slowly resumed his heavy footwear, laced up his moccasins, and watched with eager interest the quick, methodical movements of the men. In a few minutes the last of them had gone trooping away to breakfast, leaving him the sole occupant of the camp. He would have followed the crew into the cook's quarters, but remembered in time his acceptance of Miss Seavey's invitation to form one of her party at breakfast.

Fortunately, Fred Warner had been thoughtful enough the night before to bring in his canvas extender from the beaver house, and from it Norman provided himself with a towel and a cake of soap. Thus provided, the icy water of the big wooden pail lost some of its terrors, and he completed his toilet in a very leisurely manner, and with some degree of satisfaction. Following this, he spent some time in reading, by the light of the lantern, one of the newspapers which had been brought into camp by Vede Pelotte.

The first faint glimmer of dawn was just appearing when he passed out through the dingle to expand his lungs with long draughts of the crisp, balsam-laden air, and drink in the glory of the morning. Nearby a red-crested woodpecker was industriously pounding a tattoo upon the side of a tall stub. Merry little



chickadees sounded their cheery notes from the tall spruces and hemlocks, while a dozen pairs of Canada jays, perched familiarly near, impatiently scolded in noisy "*Ca-ca-ca's*" because the cook had not provided them with the morning's waste.

So absorbed was Norman in the scene before him that he did not notice the approach of Billy Eustace, until he was aroused by the sound of his voice.

"Good-morning!" called the camp boss, cordially.

"Good-morning!" responded Norman.

"Well, how did you rest?"

"Oh, very well, thank you."

"See here, Carver," continued the boss, coming close to him, and dropping his voice to a confidential tone, "I'm in a scrape, and you must help me out of it."

"A scrape?" repeated Norman, interrogatively.

"Yes. I was going out cruising to-day —"

"Cruising?" interposed Norman, in some bewilderment.

"Yes. Hunting up new timber for cutting," explained the boss, a little impatiently; "but you see, confound it all! I've got these women on my hands, an' right between you an' me, Carver, I don't think the Lord ever intended me for a ladies' man."

"Nor me, either," declared Norman, hastily.

"Oh, you'll do. You've had the training for it," insisted the boss, confidently. "I reckon you city chaps know just how to manage these things."



"Not always," protested Norman.

"Well, I count myself mighty lucky to have you around at this time — an' I want you to give your whole time to-day to beauin' them girls round."

"My knowledge of lumber-camps and logging operations is so extensive that they can scarcely fail to find me entertaining, if not instructive."

Eustace scratched the back of his head, in evident perplexity.

"That's so," he admitted, ruefully. "Darn it all, they'll be sure t' ask questions, an' Mrs. Hardy knows too much about the business to be bluffed. Well," he added, with a sigh, "I s'pose we're in for it. You just lead off and steer the conversation, an' I'll go along as the Bureau of Information."

The conversation was interrupted at this point by the men, who came laughing and joking out of the cook's camp. The teamsters, fully dressed and carrying big buckets containing the noon lunch, hurried away to the hovels to harness their horses to the bobsleds, used in logging. Some of the men paused in the dingle to light their pipes, while others hurried to the sleeping-quarters for their mackinaws and mittens.

Soon the wood-roads were resounding with the jangle of harness-bells, and the rough repartee of the loggers, as the heavy skeleton sleds, crowded with men, made their way into the forest.

Jim Benner and Jud Skinner lingered behind the others for a word with Norman.



"Tell ye what, youngster," said the veteran woodsman, in a confidential tone, "you're liable t' hev a little spare time on your hands. I reckon es how it might pay ye t' tap a few of these tall spruces round th' clearin' 'n' git some spruce gum. It's wuth a dollar 'n' a half a pound in th' city."

"Thank you," responded Norman, guardedly. The project appeared to be a very practical one; but he was determined not to commit himself on any proposition.

"Don't mention it!" replied Jim, heartily, as he hurried away to the hovel.

"Say, Carver," said Skinner, in a low tone, when Benner was out of hearing. "I hope ye ain't said nothin' 'bout thet affair et Gamewood sidin'."

"Not a word."

"An' ye won't?"

"No."

"Carver, you're a brick," declared Skinner, with emphasis. He started toward the hovels; then paused, and, casting a cautious glance about the clearing, walked quickly back. "Say," he whispered, with an air of mystery, coming close to Norman, "if ye decide t' tap them spruces, ye needn't bother t' bore new holes. You'll find a plenty of old ones a greenhorn made last fall."

"You're a brick yourself, Skinner," declared Norman, gratefully, as an appreciation of the situation dawned upon him.



"One good turn deserves another," laughed Skinner, over his shoulder, as he hurried after the men.

A moment later Mr. Seavey and the ladies appeared, escorted by Billy Eustace; and the party went in to breakfast, where the cook and cookee, clad in clean white canvas aprons, had an extra fine spread awaiting them. Baked beans, cooked in a "bean-hole," and smoking hot from the ground; cream of tartar biscuits, fresh from the oven; a ball of genuine butter; beefsteak; baked potatoes; doughnuts; cranberry sauce, and hot tea, constituted the bill of fare.

Felix Lamarre, the camp cook, prided himself on his culinary skill, which was really of no mean order; and his chest expanded visibly at the warm compliments paid him by the ladies.

"Really," declared Miss Margie, enthusiastically, "I've eaten at some fairly pretentious hotels that didn't begin to set so good a table."

"Excuse to me, mamzelle," said Felix, deprecatingly, "I do me de bes' I can wit' de proveesion w'at I have."

"You do wonderfully well," declared Miss Margie. "I think I shall have to come up here when I can stay longer, and have you teach me how to cook."

"It geev' me pleasir' for have you, but I gass I ban one for tak' de lesson," protested the cook.

"No," returned the young lady, decidedly; "what you could show me about cooking would fill a very big book. What is your part, Mr. Warner?" she added,



turning with a smile to Fred Warner, who was pouring a dipper of tea for her.

"Oh, I wash the dishes, wait on the table, and take care of the silverware," responded Fred, solemnly, a reference to the primitive tableware that evoked a general laugh.

"It doesn't make any difference what you eat things out of, so long as they're good," asserted Miss Seavey, with conviction.

"And you have a woods appetite," added Norman.

"That is really important," admitted Miss Seavey; "but you know timber and appetites are our two great crops in this section."

"I thought they were men and women," laughed Norman.

"Well, we do pride ourselves on our native talent, especially our dancers."

"She made me take her over to the hall to a French dance the other night," said Mr. Seavey.

"And did you dance?" inquired Norman, turning to Miss Margie.

"No. I couldn't get papa to take me on, and I wasn't acquainted with any of the other young gentlemen."

"Thanks for your delicate compliment," said Mr. Seavey, lightly.

"What do they dance?" inquired Norman, with interest.



"Oh, the waltz, the polka, the two-step — all the up-to-date dances," responded Miss Margie.

"Where did they learn them?" asked Norman, wonderingly.

"They never had to learn them," declared Miss Margie. "The French people are born dancers, with perfect time, and native grace of movement."

"They are a people with lots of good points," added Mr. Seavey.

So cordial and unaffected was Miss Margie, that the meal, which Norman had dreaded as something of an ordeal, passed off very pleasantly.

"I have planned to visit the yards and landings with Mr. Collins," remarked Mr. Seavey, as they rose from the table. "We have arranged to take our dinners in the woods, so that it is not likely that I shall see you again until supper-time. I feel, however, that I shall leave you in good hands."

"And where is Mr. Collins?" demanded Miss Margie.

"Oh, he was off before daylight, and I presume he has scaled two or three yards by this time. He promised to come back and pick me up at half past seven; so I presume he may be waiting for me. Are those lunches ready, Felix?"

"Rat here, M'sieu Seavey," replied the cook, handing him a six-quart lard-pail.

"Well, good-by till we meet again," and with a cheery smile Mr. Seavey left the camp. A few min-



utes later, as the rest of the party emerged from the dingle, they saw him striding up a wood-road in company with Mr. Collins.

"Well, ladies, what shall the programme be?" inquired Eustace, as they paused by the door of the beaver house.

"How far shall we have to go to see a crew at work in the woods?" asked Miss Margie.

"One of our crews is yarding about a mile from here."

"Just a good little walk," declared Miss Seavey. "Let's go and see them. You don't mind, do you, Mr. Carver?"

"Not at all," said Norman. "It will give me a chance to ask a good many foolish questions."

"Well, if there are any you overlook I'll be sure to ask them," declared Miss Margie.

"You see, Mr. Eustace, they are going to make a martyr out of you," said Mrs. Hardy, with a laugh.

"Well, I'll try to act the part," returned Eustace, with an air of resignation.

It was a beautiful winter day, and as they made their way along the wood-road that wound its course among the tall evergreens, Norman was not insensible to the charm of his fair young companion; and soon the two were somewhat in advance of the others, laughing and chatting gaily, to the great satisfaction of Billy Eustace.

Presently they heard the measured and rasping



shriek of a cross-cut saw, followed by a shout of "Under!" and the rushing, roaring sound of a falling tree, as it went crashing and thundering down upon the smaller growth beneath. A moment later they came upon a large pile of logs by the roadside.

"Here's the yard," announced Eustace. "There's over four hundred logs in it already."

Norman looked at the tall pile, nearly twice his height, in wonder and perplexity.

"How do they get them up there?" he asked.

"They parbuckle 'em," responded Eustace.

Norman shook his head.

"That's Greek to me," he confessed.

"Do you see those smaller logs that extend from the top of the pile to the ground, forming an incline?"

"Yes."

"Well, those are called skids, as are also the small logs which run transversely between each layer of larger ones and are used to pile them on. By means of notches cut in these skids, the decks, or layers of logs that are piled upon them, are prevented from rolling and rendered as firm as a house. Those inclined skids make a roadway up which the big logs are rolled to the top of the pile. See that big chain on the front of the pile?"

"Yes."

"Well, you notice that its ends pass up over the top log — one on one side of the pile and one on the other side — and are securely fastened to the upper





OVER FOUR HUNDRED LOGS IN IT ALREADY. — Page 154.







end of the inclined skids. This, as you see, makes a loop of the chain. When a log is dragged in to be piled this loop is passed under it. A slip or grab-link is then fastened to the middle link of the loop. This is easily done, for the upper part of the slip-link is round, enabling it to be passed readily along the chain. The lower part, or throat, however, is narrow and oblong, and when it is drawn up on a chain-link it holds just there. That's why they call it a 'grab-link.' Do you see that iron pulley fastened to the tree back of the pile, with the wire cable running through it?"

"I noticed that," said Norman.

"Well, that cable has a hook on each end of it. When a log is to be piled on the yard, it is first hauled to the foot of two inclined skids at the front of the pile; then the loop, or, as it is called, the decking chain, is passed under and over it from the front. The grab-link is then set up exactly midway of the loop; one end of the wire cable is hooked into the top of this grab-link and the other end to the ring of a whiffletree, and a horse hauling on the cable pulls the log up the inclined skids as easily as if it were a lead-pencil."

"But there is a second pulley on the wire cable," said Norman.

"Yes. That's merely to increase the purchase, on the principle of the tackle-and-fall. The parbuckle is a very convenient way of handling big logs in the woods, not merely in yarding them, but also in loading them onto the sleds when there is a lower layer, or



deck load, and it is necessary to take the upper logs from the ground. The parbuckle is also used to roll the upper logs into place in building our logging-camps."

Even as Eustace was speaking, a heavy team of bay Percherons came out from the near-by clump of tall trees in which the sawyers were at work, dragging a big spruce log. This was unloaded at the foot of the inclined skids and rolled over the loop of the big decking-chain, one end of the wire cable was hooked into the slip-link and the other into the whiffletree of one of the horses, which had been detached from his mate for this work. As the powerful bay moved forward at the command of his teamster, the big log, cradled in the loop of the chain, rolled rapidly up the inclined skids to the top of the pile. So easily had this seemingly difficult task been performed, that Norman and the ladies were at a loss to express their surprise and admiration.

"You must not suppose that all the logs on a yard are put in place with a parbuckle," said Eustace; "that's only used on the upper layers. When the men start the yard and the incline of the skids running from the end is an easy one, it is full quicker to roll the logs into place with peaveys."

"What is a peavey?" asked Norman.

"Well, there are a couple of them leaning against the end of that yard. They are called peaveys after the name of the man who invented them — and they



play a mighty important part in logging-operations."

Norman picked up one of the wooden bars, or levers, which Eustace indicated, and examined it carefully. It was about five feet long and larger at the lower end, where it was fitted with a steel pike and socket. To the upper end of this socket was attached a curved steel hook, working easily on the bolt that hinged it in place, and furnishing an ideal device for rolling logs.

"Perhaps you'd like to see a tree felled," suggested Eustace, turning to Miss Seavey.

"Oh, I should just love to!" was the prompt response.

"Well, let's take that big hemlock there beside the road. Tell the boys to come out here," he called to the teamster, who was driving his horses back to the cutting.

A moment later, five woodsmen put in an appearance, one of whom carried a long cross-cut saw.

"Take down that hemlock," ordered the boss.

"Shall we lay him up the road?" asked the short, thick-set man with the saw.

"Yes."

Even as he spoke two men were busy with their axes, cutting away the bushes and underbrush that grew beneath the big tree.

When their efforts had provided a working space at the foot of the tree, the sawyer's assistant, a tall, wiry man, stepped up to the tree and began cutting a



notch in its big trunk from the side on which it was planned to have it fall. Norman watched with admiration his full, free swing of the axe, and the precision with which its sharp edge sank into the soft wood, making the great chips fly and leaving the kerf almost as smooth as if it had been sawed and sandpapered.

Presently, the chopper paused and wiped his perspiring brow with a red bandanna handkerchief of portentous size.

"I gass dat feex heem," he said. "Lay heem rat down between dem two fir-tree."

He passed to the opposite side of the tree. Laying down his axe, he took one handle of the long cross-cut saw and began, with the assistance of his companion, to draw its sharp teeth back and forth across the rough trunk, filling the forest with its shrill and rasping plaint.

"Oh, how that grates on my nerves!" exclaimed Miss Margie, pressing her gloved forefingers into her ears.

"It is a bit spiteful," admitted Norman.

When the cutting portion of the blade had passed from sight a short distance in the trunk of the tree, the sawyers paused, removed one of the handles, and drew the long blade from the kerf, or channel, which it had cut for itself. Iron wedges were then driven into the outer edge of the cut, the saw was pushed back into its self-made slot, and the work went steadily and rapidly forward again.



Presently the big tree began to waver. The saw was withdrawn and the wedges driven sharply home. For a moment the big forest monarch tottered upon its stump, and then, with a mighty crash, went thundering down into the cushioning snow, precisely where the undercutter had planned for it to fall.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE REAPPEARANCE OF "CLOUTER" KELTY.

The moment the giant tree struck the ground the sled-tender began cutting away its big limbs, with a rapidity that was surprising to Norman and Miss Seavey, who had never before seen this work performed. In a short time he had cleared the trunk to the point where it was to be cut off. Standing on top of it, he accomplished this task with surprising quickness and ease, leaving the end of the big log severed from the bushy top almost as evenly as if it had been cut off with a saw.

There had been no false motions, no waste of power, in the clean, free swing of the axe, whose sharp blade buried itself again and again in the soft wood at the precise spot aimed at.

"Would you care to wait and see this log yarded?" asked Eustace, turning to Miss Margie.

"No. I think we've seen enough," returned the young lady. "O my!" she exclaimed abruptly, as she caught sight of a big smoke-grimed teapot hung upon a charred horizontal pole, the ends of which were suspended upon crotched sticks. Beneath was a big hole in the snow, half filled with ashes and charcoal,



which showed where fires for making tea had formerly burned.

"That's where the men make their tea at noon," returned Eustace. "I've been having Fred Warner bring the lunches hot from the camp with this particular crew, but to-day I let the men take them along with them in the morning."

"You see we are very troublesome people," said Miss Margie, turning to Mrs. Hardy. "No doubt Mr. Eustace is wishing this very minute that we'd go home, and let matters here resume the even tenor of their way."

"Why — you — you mustn't think that," stammered Eustace, in some confusion.

"Where are they?" demanded Miss Margie, ignoring his disclaimer.

"What?" asked Eustace, in some bewilderment.

"The men's lunches."

"Oh," responded the boss, with a look of relief. "They're buried in the snow at the back of the fire-hole."

"Buried in the snow! What for?"

"To keep the food from freezing."

"And will that prevent it?"

"Generally, not always."

"But," persisted Miss Margie, a little incredulously, "most of those men are working in their shirt sleeves."

"They'll be glad enough to put on their sweaters



and mackinaws when they stop work for lunch," returned Eustace.

"You wouldn't care to take off that fur coat, would you?" asked Mrs. Hardy.

"No," admitted Miss Margie; "but, really, it makes the rest of us look sort of namby-pamby to see the way these men defy the cold."

"Let's take a last look at this hemlock," said Norman, as they turned down the wood-road in the direction of the camp.

"We didn't use to value those fellows very much for timber," said Eustace. "Men are going into the Maine woods every fall now and yarding hemlock logs that were cut originally for their bark. We have been mighty wasteful in our lumbering methods here in Maine in years past, and are very far from careful at the present time."

"Cut down great trees like that, simply to get their bark?" cried Norman, in amazement. "What did they do with it?"

"Sold it to tanneries," replied Eustace. "The hemlock-bark business is still an important Maine industry."

"And what do they do with it there?"

"Use it for tanning hides in the manufacture of leather."

"And they paid no attention to the lumber after they'd peeled off the bark?" questioned Norman, incredulously.





THE CREW AT LUNCH. — Page 162.







"Very little until within comparatively recent years. The trees were cut and peeled in summer, when the bark comes off easily. The bark was piled up for winter hauling, and the trees left on the ground where they fell, to become buried and lost later on in the deep snows. Now most operators yard the logs before snow falls, for the market will take care of all the hemlock lumber the sawmills can turn out, and at good prices."

"The life of a tree doesn't count very much, I fancy, with woodsmen," observed Miss Margie.

"Not at all," conceded Eustace; "and, in spite of all our efforts to prevent it, a great many valuable young trees are needlessly destroyed by our crews. Ah —" he added, abruptly, stopping by the side of a big, seamy spruce, "here's a gum tree."

"A gum tree — is that a special kind?" asked Norman.

"It's one that has seen its troubles," answered Eustace, enigmatically. "I suppose," he added, with a sudden gleam of comprehension, "some of the camp jokers have tried to get you to tap for gum."

"One of them suggested it," admitted Norman, a trifle red in the face.

"I'll bet a dollar it was Jim Benner," declared the boss, with a laugh. "You'll have to fight shy of him, Carver. McMurray's going to send me a man to take his place in the yarding crew, and I'm going to use him at the camp to tend landing. So you're liable to



see considerable of him. That old scamp wouldn't hesitate to play practical jokes on his own grandmother. He had a young feller tapping spruce trees all 'round the camp clearing last fall."

"I'd heard of that," said Norman.

"I don't believe you'd have acted on his suggestion if you hadn't," declared Miss Margie, with conviction.

Norman gave her a grateful smile.

"I'm certainly not going to be precipitate about engaging in new ventures," he said.

"Spruce gum," declared Eustace, "is really the healing salve of the spruce tree. Let a heavy wind, or the too rapid warming of a frosty tree by a rising March sun, open up a seam in its trunk, or a woodsman's axe blaze its side, and Nature at once begins repair work by covering it with a soft, resinous gum. This is usually a work of four or five years. After that the gum gradually hardens in the sun, often standing out in lumps or nodules, and is then ready for the picker. You see the gum on this tree exudes from this seam running up the trunk. The men have gathered all the best of it that was within reach. Further up the trunk you will see some clear lumps. That is called 'blister gum,' and commands about \$1.50 a pound in the market. This gum on the side, covered largely with moss and bark, is seam gum, which usually brings about half as much."

"O my!" exclaimed Miss Margie, looking up the tall trunk in comic despair; "so near, and yet so far!"



"You mustn't get discouraged," admonished Eustace, lightly. "Yankee ingenuity is equal to all emergencies. It has solved many a worse problem than that."

Taking a tiny axe from his belt, he proceeded to cut down a tall, slim spruce. "There goes a future sawlog," he commented, grimly, as it fell to the ground. When he had carefully trimmed the few limbs from the top of this pole, Eustace produced and opened a big hunting-knife. The handle of this, made from a deer's foot, he tied firmly to one end of the pole with a piece of stout twine which he had carried in his pocket. He and Norman then spread their mackinaws upon the snow at the foot of the seam, and in a short time both were covered with lumps and slivers of gum which Eustace cut away with his improvised spear.

"Aren't we a sight!" was Miss Margie's comment, as the party resumed their walk to the camp, each one busily engaged in chewing a big cud of the aromatic gum.

"It's the style up here," laughed Mrs. Hardy. "Besides, it's good for the digestion."

"I shall certainly need it, then, when I get another chance at those baked beans," declared Norman.

They had the cook's camp all to themselves that noon, and it was evident that Felix Lamarre and Fred Warner had made all possible preparations for their comfort. A brisk fire burned in the beaver house,



which had been put in apple-pie order, and when they sat before the rude table at dinner, the generous fare with which it was loaded made them almost forget the primitive character of the service.

Miss Seavey delighted the heart of the smiling and affable Felix by declaring that his mince pies were the finest she had ever tasted.

After dinner the team which had conveyed Mr. Seavey and the ladies to Camp 4 was again brought into use; and Billy Eustace, acting as driver, and accompanied by Norman, showed his fair visitors the work which was being carried on by the members of his crew — the extent and magnitude of which called forth their warmest praise.

Mr. Collins and Mr. Seavey rejoined the party at supper that evening; and Norman, who had begun to appreciate somewhat the conditions under which lumbering operations were conducted, found their conversation both instructive and interesting. The ladies were in the best of spirits, and the meal passed off most pleasantly. Before Norman bade them good-night, to return to his quarters in the men's camp, Miss Margie, who was evidently enjoying her outing, had exacted a promise from him to take breakfast with her party in the morning.

Somehow the big camp seemed less repellent to Norman than it had the evening before; not because its atmosphere was any the less overheated, or its steamy odors any the less oppressive, but rather because



he had grown slightly familiar with these conditions, and knew, moreover, from the hearty greetings of the men, that he was on a friendly footing with them.

He was about to take his place on one of the deacon seats before the side bunks, when, glancing across the camp to the group of men on the opposite seat, he caught sight of a face that held his eyes in a fascinated stare, and filled his heart with a sudden fear. Sitting next to Jim Benner was a newcomer — a man with such repulsive features that even some of the men in the crew, little given as woodsmen are to being critical in the matter of personal appearance, could not refrain from showing their aversion.

One look at the thick-set frame, the bullet-shaped head, the sullen mouth with its protruding lower jaw, the black, furtive eyes, and the livid red scar extending from above the right eye into the scalp, was sufficient to reveal to Norman the identity of the newcomer. He was none other than "Clouter" Kelty, the escaped thief and murderer! For a moment the impulse was strong upon Norman to stand out among the men and tell them who their new comrade really was, and the infamous record that lay behind him; but he refrained. It was evident that Kelty did not recognize him in his new garb and amid his new surroundings; for he merely gave him a casual glance upon his entrance, and went on puffing serenely at the new corncob pipe he was smoking.

"You say that rich old sport from New York has



got a joint up there?" he said to Pete Bedotte, continuing his conversation with the big Frenchman.

"Yass. Wan nice leetle cabane. He feexed up jus' lak wan belle maison, rug in floor, beeg fireplace on cornerre, nice spreeng bed — firs' rat' chair for seet on. Monjee! De nice t'ing w'at he have in teen can for eat mak' you waterre on top you mout'!"

"Right on the shore of Deer Trail pond, you say?"

"Yass."

"It must be a great stopping place for landlookers. I should think you lumberjacks would go up there Sundays to fish through the ice and enjoy his Nibs' layout."

"We can't do dat. Hees door ban fas' wit' iron strap on padlock."

"Oh, I see," responded Kelty, carelessly.

A number of the crew had removed their pipes from their mouths, and were eyeing the newcomer curiously.

"I reckon you've logged in Wisconsin or Michigan," said old Jim Benner, dryly.

This suggestion had a startling effect upon Kelty. He paled visibly, and, jumping to his feet, cast a quick, suspicious glance about him.

"You — you lie!" he gasped, hotly.

In a moment Benner was on his feet, and advanced upon the newcomer menacingly.

"'Lie' is a fightin'-word in this 'ere region," he said, with ominous coolness. "I reckon ye'd better take thet back."



"Swat him, Jim!"

"Jomp on hees collarre!"

"Soak eet on heem!"

"Leeft heem wan!"

"He ban too beeg on hees pants!"

These and other shouts of encouragement plainly showed the sympathy of the crew, and suggested to the wrathful Kelty the advisability of caution.

"I—I meant you were mistaken," he said, in a low voice, tense with suppressed passion.

"Thet sounds better," said Benner, in a mollified tone, resuming his seat. "'most any on us is liable to be mistook; but we don't stan' fer liars up here at Camp 4—do we, boys?"

"No! No! bat you life!" came in a chorus from the crew, who had gathered eagerly about Benner and Kelty, in the hopeful anticipation of a scrap.

"Now, stranger, you used words es is foreign to this 'ere gang—words we don't hear up here in Maine, 'cept when some feller comes back from the Lake States 'n' fetches 'em along with 'im. I lumbered one winter myself out in Wisconsin, 'n' I know what I'm a-talkin' 'bout. We've got lots of prospectors 'n' cruisers here in Maine; but no landlookers. We also hev some o' the best loggers 'n' th' world in our woods-crews, but no lumberjacks."

"Ba cripe, dat ban jus' so," corroborated big Pete Bedotte. "You hav' go on west for fin' dem fellaire."

"Well, I didn't go there for them," explained Kelty.



"I picked 'em up right here in Maine from a chum o' mine who used to lumber in the west."

"If that's the case," said Benner, coolly, "I don't see what call you've got t' be so durned tetchy erbout it."

"I've known people to get rich and keep in good health by 'tending strictly to their own affairs," growled Kelty.

"This pore critter 'pears t' be sick," interposed Ike Tapley, in his thin, nasal tones. "Needs a little medicine, don't he, boys?"

"Sure t'ing! Bat you life!" shouted the men, with enthusiasm.

"He won't find it in the wangan," declared Jim Benner, with emphasis. "There's only two kinds there. One's for *men*, 'n' t'other's for hosses."

"Dat leffs heem out," said big Pete Bedotte.

"I don't see why they ever wanted horse-medicine in this collection of long-ears," sneered Kelty.

"Ba Joe! He call us long on de ear!" returned big Pete. "He put de wan beeg insult on top dees gang. I gass he need heem som' dat codfeesh plaster. W'at you t'ink, Skinner?"

"Great stuff," responded Skinner, with a sickly grin, casting a hasty glance around at the crew, who, to his relief, were evidently oblivious to Pete's harrowing reference.

"De codfeesh! De codfeesh!" they shouted, in a tumult of enthusiasm.



There was a quick and concerted rush upon the astonished Kelty; the knife which he had attempted to draw was wrested from his grasp, and he was borne, struggling and cursing, to the wood-pile in front of the dingle, stretched over a big birch log, and treated to the same kind of chastisement that had been meted out to Jud Skinner at Gamewood siding. Jim Benner wielded the codfish; but no plea for mercy came from Kelty. He bore his punishment with the stoicism of an Indian. When released he hobbled painfully back to the camp, and crawled sullenly into the bunk which had been assigned him, and from which he did not emerge till the following morning. There was, however, a baleful light in his eye that did not escape Norman's notice. Knowing the desperate and vindictive character of the man, he felt satisfied that Kelty would never rest until he had revenged himself for the indignity he had suffered, particularly in the case of old Jim Benner, upon whom his eyes, bloodshot with passion, rested with the most malevolent glare.

"We must put Benner on his guard against that man," said Norman, as he and Fred Warner were stowing themselves away in their bunk for the night.

"Who — Pat Farrow?"

"Is that what he calls himself?"

"Yes. I heard him tell Felix that was his name."

"Well, Fred, you may depend upon it, he's a desperate and wicked fellow, who will bear the closest kind of watching."



"Just my opinion of him," acquiesced Fred.

"Where is Harry McMurray, the walking boss?" inquired Norman. "I thought, from what Mr. Collins told me, that he made his headquarters at this camp."

"He does — in a way. He usually gets here sometime the last of the week and stays over Sunday. You see, he has five camps in his bunch, and he plans to make the rounds every week. Sometimes, however, he has to stop and cruise a day or two at some particular camp where the timber is growing scarce along the established roads. Of course that cuts him short at some other camp. Still it will surprise you to see what a close tab he keeps on every part of the territory he operates."

"Does he hire all the men?"

"Practically all. Occasionally one shows up in his absence, and is hired by the camp boss. He keeps a good many of his old men year after year. Then he gets new ones through an agency in Bangor, that is supplied in part from an agency in Boston. These city fellows don't make very good loggers, though, and Harry doesn't calculate to get any more of them than he can help, unless they come with the recommendation of former logging experience."

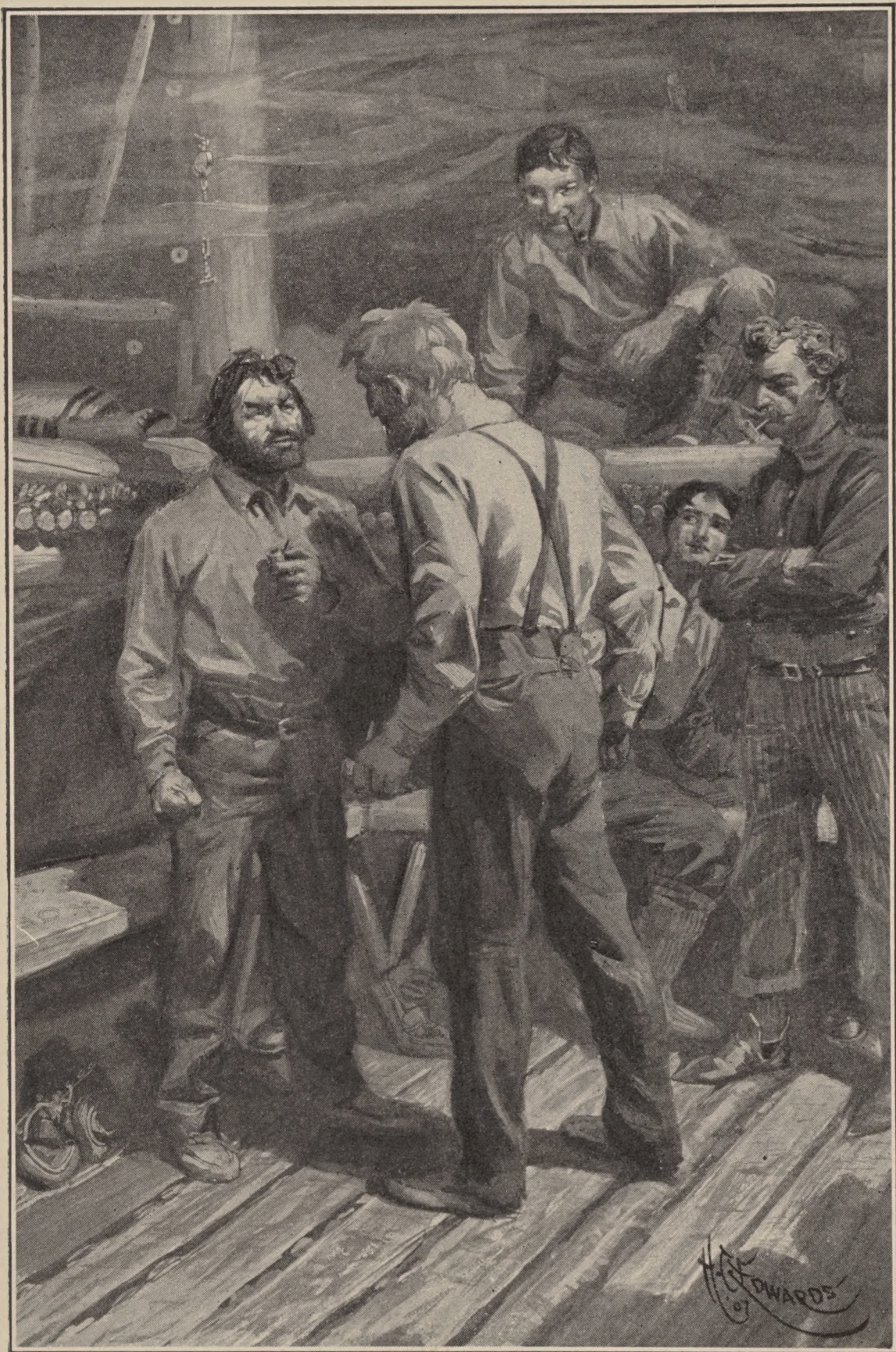
"I suppose I shall be a cross to him," said Norman, soberly.

"I think not," returned Fred, confidently. "You've had the education to succeed in your part of the work.









“‘LIE’ IS A FIGHTIN’-WORD IN THIS ’ERE REGION.” —Page 168.



I should have liked a clerk's job myself if I'd had schooling enough to tackle it; but I've had a mighty slim chance in that direction. You see, father died when I was only ten years old, leaving his farm only about half cleared. I've had to scratch pretty hard since that time to help mother get a living. I have two younger brothers — one fifteen and one thirteen — and a little ten-year-old sister at home with mother. The boys are taking care of the stock, doing the chores, and all three are going to school this winter. I'm just bound they shall have a better show than I've had."

"I should never have supposed you lacking in education, Fred," returned Norman. "You certainly use much better language than the men around you."

"Oh, I've read quite a little — what chance I could get; but my handwriting is too bad, and I'm too shy on figures to do clerical work."

"You're bright enough to overcome that," declared Norman, confidently. "There's more than one kind of education, Fred. I shall be glad to help you there for what you can help me in a hundred other ways."

"I shall be a thousand times obliged to you if you will," returned Fred, eagerly, "although I don't believe I shall ever be able to repay you."

"The debt will be mostly on my side," protested Norman, warmly.

The conversation, which had been carried on in whispers, was brought to a close at this point, for both boys were growing drowsy. Strangely enough, Nor-



man failed to notice the various noises that had so disturbed him the previous night, and was soon sleeping as soundly as his companions.



## CHAPTER XIV

### NORMAN MEETS HARRY MCMURRAY

It was a merry party that gathered about a table in the cook's camp the following morning, a full hour after the men had eaten and gone to their work.

Mr. Seavey and the ladies were about to take their departure for home, having had, as Miss Margie expressed it, "a perfectly lovely time." The vivacious young lady was at her best, and Norman felt that the camp would seem decidedly lonesome when she and Mrs. Hardy were gone. He fancied, however, that he detected signs of positive relief in the rugged features of Billy Eustace, although the camp boss cordially invited both ladies to come again, when, snugly wrapped in heavy robes on the back seat of their long pung, they bade him good-by at parting.

"I'm very glad to have met you, Mr. Carver," said Miss Margie, "and we shall hope to have you come and see us at Aerie Lake before you return to Boston."

"I certainly shall be delighted to come," said Norman, heartily.

A moment later the party disappeared around a bend in the wood-road, and Norman followed Billy Eustace into the beaver house.



"This will be your home, now the women are gone," announced the boss. "There are four of us here at present: Jim Benner, Ike Tapley, and one of the teamsters, Dan Peters, a Yankee who owns his own horses. That leaves us two vacant bunks: one for the walking foreman, or boss, and the other for a clerk. Mr. Collins has a bunk in the scalers' camp; but he stays here a good part of the time and sleeps in Harry McMurray's bunk. It's considerably more sociable, especially when the stumpage scaler is away — although he really isn't much company."

"The stumpage scaler?"

"Yes. Aaron Slowman, the fellow who scales for the landowners to determine how much timber is to be charged to us at stumpage rates. He's usually the last fellow to bed at night, and the last one up in the morning. Hangs so close to his den that none of us see much of him. In fact he's about as sociable as a clam, and not a bit more active than is absolutely necessary to hold down his job. I reckon he's 'refreshed his memory,' as the sayin' is, more'n once from our man's notes. Mr. Collins, you know, is the company's scaler. His work is, of course, to some extent, a tab on the stumpage scaler's return. Its chief value, however, is to keep the company advised of the exact progress it is making, in order that it may know how to make its plans to bring about the total cut it desires. Bring your dunnage in whenever you wish. You are to have that lower right-hand bunk," he added.



"All alone?"

"Yes. Unless you invite some one to share it."

"Can I do that?"

"Sure, if you want to."

"I'd like to have Fred Warner with me, if there wouldn't be any objection."

"Not in the least. Fred's a good fellow. Bring him in if you want to."

"Thanks!" said Norman, warmly; "and now, Mr. Eustace, I'd like to get to work. I've felt like a loafer ever since I got here."

"On the contrary, I feel as if you'd done the best job for me that you'll do this winter. I was mighty lucky to have you at hand for it. Great Scott! but didn't I sweat blood when I heard them women were coming!"

"And now for my duties."

"Well, you are to keep the books, look after the beaver house, tend the wangan, and make yourself generally useful. Later on, we may break you in to filing saws."

"Filing saws!" exclaimed Norman, aghast at the suggestion.

"Yes. We'll try you out at it later. You may be a failure at it, or, if you happen to have a little mechanical turn, you may make a crack-a-jack. Time will tell. While our men are hired here for particular jobs, they are all expected to fill in anywhere when opportunity affords."



"The bookkeeping —" began Norman, nervously.

"Won't bother you a minute," interposed Eustace. "I've got it all up to date, worked it out the last two nights in the scaler's camp. This," he continued, producing a small book from the tobacco-box draw beneath the rough desk, "is our time-book. In this I enter opposite each man's name the time he commenced work, and the wages he is to receive. He is checked up each day he works in those small squares opposite. If for any cause he doesn't work, the time lost is duly noted. When he leaves we make up his time on what we call a time-slip, deducting any sum he may be owing the wangan. That time-slip is the same as a check. He can cash it at any of the stores or banks in the settlements."

"I think I understand it," said Norman.

"Just as easy as rollin' off a log," declared Eustace. "This book," he continued, "is our record of the logs cut and yarded by each of the crews. I always post this once a fortnight. There's a great rivalry among the crews, to see which one will make the best showing. We also keep in this book a record of the logs hauled to the landings by each of the various teamsters. We've only a couple of teams hauling to the landings now; but later on we shall also have the six teams that are now yarding. The contest will be red-hot then. None of the men want their teams to make a poor showing in comparison with the others. It's a grand hustle all along the line."



"I guess I can manage this," said Norman, after he had examined the book for a moment.

"This is the wangan, our camp store," continued Eustace, unlocking one of the big chests which had attracted Norman's attention when he first visited the beaver house. "Here's the book. You see it has an alphabetical index on the front. A separate account is kept with each man, which is crossed off when he leaves. Where we have clerks we usually keep part of the goods out on shelves; but here I've been obliged to be away so much that I have kept everything locked up in the chests. This chest is given over chiefly to Yankee notions and to tobacco, which is our principal article of trade. The other one contains the clothing. Here's a set of keys for you. I always keep the wangan book, and the price book, locked up in this chest, and also the other books when I am absent from the camp for any length of time. We also have this stock book, in which you will have to enter all the supplies brought in by the tote-teams; it won't be necessary, however, for you to be here all the time to check them off. The teamster will pass you in a list of each load he hauls. Well, I reckon that's about all," concluded Eustace. "We shall expect you to do an errand now and then, keep the beaver house tidied up, and lug an occasional pail of water from the lake for us."

"Is there anything I can start in on right now?" asked Norman.

"Yes. Once a fortnight we copy off the record



from our books on these printed blanks, and forward them, together with our requisitions for supplies, to the company's main office in Bangor. If it is something we're in a special rush for we send our requisition to Mr. Seavey at Aerie Lake, and he supplies us from the mill store. These reports and requisitions are due to go forward Monday, so you may copy them off to-day. I must get out and do some cruising. If you get stuck on anything, lay it aside and I'll help you straighten it out this evening."

"By the way, who keeps these log records?" asked Norman.

"The tenders on the yards and landings. They hand them in every evening. Now I must leave you. Take your time, and if there's anything that bothers you let it wait," and taking down a pair of snow-shoes that hung on a nail above the door, Eustace hurried out of the camp.

Perched upon his high stool, Norman gave himself steadily to the task before him. The bookkeeping was simple, and the blanks plain, so that he encountered far less difficulty than he had feared. He had finished the log book at ten o'clock, and was about to copy the stubs of the time-slip book, when the door opened to admit a newcomer.

He was a powerfully built man, about forty years of age, dressed in mackinaw, leggings, and moccasins, and wearing a heavy red toque on his head. Norman felt that he had never before seen such a magnificent



specimen of physical manhood. The newcomer stood a strong six feet in his stockings. He was as straight as an arrow, broad-shouldered and full-chested, but carried not an ounce of superfluous flesh. His movements were light and springy, giving unmistakable evidence of vitality and endurance. His features were clear-cut and regular, his face full and flushed with the ruddy glow of perfect health. A heavy growth of dark hair covered his head, and clear blue eyes looked fearlessly out from beneath a high forehead. Here was, obviously, a born leader of men, a man of tremendous strength and endurance. A glance at his firm mouth, and resolute bearing, was sufficient to impress one with the fact that he was also a man of tenacious will and indomitable courage. Instinctively Norman guessed his identity.

"Is this Mr. McMurray?" he asked, getting down from his seat at the desk.

"That's my name," said the newcomer, turning from the corner where he had hung his snow-shoes, "and this, I reckon, is Norman Carver."

Norman nodded assent.

"Dave Hardy told me you had gone in. I stopped with him the night after you were there," said the walking boss, giving him a hearty shake of the hand. A cordial smile lit up McMurray's face, and suggested to Norman a spirit of fellowship that explained in part the mysterious power which this man was known to exert upon his followers. There was, at the same



time, a certain dignity of bearing about him, which made it plain without words, that the man who enjoyed McMurray's favor must merit it, and that no man could safely carry familiarity with him to the point that would breed contempt.

"I see they've got you in harness," he said, with a glance at the papers on the desk.

"Yes," said Norman, "I just got started this morning."

"Billy detailed you for the ladies yesterday — did he?" continued McMurray, with twinkling eyes.

"Yes."

"I thought he would. Haven't struck any snags, have you?"

"I'm not sure," confessed Norman.

McMurray took a seat on one of the bunks at the end of the table, and ran over the blanks Norman had copied off. "These seem to be O. K.," he said. "Suppose I call off the items for you and let you verify them."

He picked up the log book, and in a deep, full voice, called off the various names and figures that made up its entries for the preceding two weeks. Norman checked up the items on his copy, and was much gratified to find it correct.

"You'll do, I reckon," said McMurray, approvingly.

"I'm glad you think so," said Norman, modestly; "but what about to-day's record?"

"Goes over into the next report. The company



doesn't ask any man in its woods crews to work Sundays. Did Billy tell you about the wangan?"

"He gave me the keys, and told me how the book was kept."

"Well, all the stuff is tagged and the prices marked. This is a strictly one-price store. The divisions on the big bars of tobacco indicate the ten-cent plugs. There's a cutter in the chest."

"This isn't a roguery box, then?"

McMurray glanced at him with an amused smile.

"I see you've heard of the general wangan reputation," he said. "No. This isn't a roguery box here, though we aren't maintaining it entirely for our health. We don't intend, however, to commit highway robbery on the men. For instance, we sell tobacco as cheaply as they do in the settlements, although we are under an extra expense for transportation."

He paused a moment, and indulged in a reminiscent smile.

"I remember very well how old Gid Shriver used to butcher his men on the wangan account, when I lumbered with him twenty years ago on West Branch waters," he said. "I was in the beaver house when Gid was calling off the items in an account for a Frenchman who was going out, and had come in for his time.

"'Two pair o' larrigans, seven dollars,' he read.

"'Hol' on!' interrupted the Frenchman. 'Ba cripe, I only get wan pair.'



" 'One pair of larrigans, seven dollars,' repeated Gid, in the same tone; and the Frenchman, having secured his correction, offered no further objection."

"I hope that isn't a fair sample of wangan methods," laughed Norman.

"No, it isn't," declared McMurray; "but it was a fair example of Gid Shriver's."

At this point their conversation was interrupted by excited shouts on the shore of the lake.

"Ah, something's gone wrong!" exclaimed McMurray, as he hurried out of the camp and made his way in the direction of the sound, closely followed by Norman.

Arriving at the landing, they found a Frenchman sitting on a log, holding a bare foot across his knee, and crying hysterically. The teamster, whose empty sleds still stood in the road, was standing beside him in a very evident state of panic.

"What's the trouble here?" demanded McMurray.

"He hurt," responded the teamster.

"Hurt bad?"

"Ba golly! I t'ink so. He tear hees feenger-nail rat off hees toe."

"Well, let's take him up to the camp," said McMurray, in a choked voice, and picking up the injured man as if he had been a child, he lugged him into the men's camp and laid him upon one of the bunks.

"Start the fire," he said briefly to one of the men.

In a moment a cheerful blaze was roaring in the



big stove, while the walking boss, producing a roll of antiseptic gauze, proceeded to bandage the injured foot with no little skill.

"I have to be something of a surgeon, as well as a jack-at-all-trades," he remarked to Norman, as he completed his task.

"This man was going out to-morrow," he added, "and we had arranged for Jim Benner to take charge of the landing. Brace up, 'Poleon," he added, to the man in the bunk. "You'll be all right in a day or two, and I'll arrange for you to ride out Monday with Vede Pelotte."

Returning to the beaver house, they found a much mended pung, drawn by an emaciated white horse, standing in front of the door. It contained an old man and a younger one, who was evidently his son.

"Frenchmen from the back settlements," explained McMurray.

As they came alongside of the pung the older man began talking volubly in French.

McMurray shook his head.

"No understand. What does he say?" he asked, turning to the younger man.

"He say you wan' buy som' oat?"

"How many's he got?"

The young man turned and spoke to his father in French.

"He say 'mos' honder bushel," he interpreted.

"When can he haul them?"



"He say firs' de week."

"Yes. Tell him I'll take 'em at the regular price, if they're clean oats. If they're not, I don't want 'em at all."

The young man hesitated.

"You wan' hire nodder man on top you place?" he asked.

"Where you been working?"

"For M'sieu Smit'."

"Sam Smith over on Otter pond?"

"Yass."

"How did you happen to leave him?"

"Ma wife he seeck. I go down Madwasco for see her. W'en I come back M'sieu Smit' ban ver', ver' mad. He tak' me by collarre. He keeck me rat out from onder ma hat. Ba gosh! I tole M'sieu Smit' I ban no eggshell."

"So you concluded it was time to quit — did you?"

"Yass. I ronne fas' on ma foot."

"What did you do for Smith?"

"Swamp on road."

"Can you come now?"

"Yass."

"All right, I'll hire you. We're cruising some new territory to-day, an' I reckon we'll have some new roads to swamp the first of the week. Take your dunnage into the camp," he added, "and go down and help out on the landing. Shouldn't wonder if he was a good swamper," he remarked to Norman, as they



re-entered the beaver house. "Those back-settlement boys are usually pretty handy with the axe."

"I should suppose the use of the saw in felling trees would bring about a scarcity of good choppers," observed Norman.

"Not at all," returned McMurray. "Bless you, the men of this section begin to use an axe as soon as they're big enough to toddle to a wood-pile. I've been in the lumber-camps for the past twenty years, and there are just as good axemen in this very crew as I've ever seen anywhere."

"Can men fell more trees with the saw than with the axe?" asked Norman.

"I don't think so," returned McMurray. "They may cut a tree off a trifle quicker with a saw, but it takes a little longer to clear away for the work. Two good men with a saw, under fairly favorable conditions, will lay down sixty or sixty-five trees a day, and two good choppers working with axes under the same conditions wouldn't come far short of it."

He was silent for a few moments, evidently absorbed in a brown study.

"I rather guess Billy went up on D," he said, presently. "I think I'll cruise up there myself after dinner, and see how the land lays."

"How are you going to tell whose land you are on?" questioned Norman.

"Oh, that's easy," was the careless rejoinder. "All the wild lands in the State are surveyed off into ranges,



townships, and lots, the boundaries of which have been marked, with a little tool used for the purpose, on spotted trees. A man familiar with the woods has no difficulty in finding them, especially if he carries a good map. The wild section of Maine is divided into tiers of townships — six miles square — running from east to west across the State, and known as ranges. In traveling the State from the south to the extreme northwest, we should cross twenty different ranges. The various townships in these ranges are designated by letter as D Range 3, C Range 10, and so on. Each township is subdivided into lots of about one hundred acres each. All these boundaries, ranges, townships and lots, have been duly surveyed and marked."

"Still, I should think you'd never be able to find them in this tangle of forest," persisted Norman. "I should think you'd always be in danger of cutting over the line onto some other man's land."

"Such things have happened before now," returned McMurray, dryly. "In fact, an old rule in the woods used to be to cut over a line as far as one could throw an axe. Still, those who have to pay stumpage on all the logs they have don't gain anything by such practices. While a few knaves have grown rich through such dishonesty, more of them have come to grief. Ah," he added, as Fred Warner shouted "Dinner!" from the camp door, "that means you and me."



## CHAPTER XV

### AN EVENING IN THE BEAVER HOUSE

When McMurray had donned his snow-shoes after dinner, and gone, with long strides, into the forest, Norman lingered about the cook's camp for a while, watching Felix Lamarre and Fred Warner as they deftly cleared away the tables and washed the tin dishes.

"Dinner with only about half a dozen men to feed is a mere fleabite," declared Fred, good-humoredly. "It's breakfast and supper, when the gang are here, that makes us hustle 'round and earn our money."

Later, as Warner was on his way to the lake for water, Norman joined him at the door of the beaver house, pail in hand. "I think I'll go with you," he said. "Billy Eustace told me that lugging water was to be one of my duties."

"Oh, they all take a hack at that in the beaver house," returned Fred, lightly.

Arriving at the lake, Norman's attention was attracted by what appeared to be a bough wigwam a short distance from the shore.

"That's the water-hole," said Fred, briefly, following his companion's gaze.



"But why do they cover it up that way—to keep it from freezing?"

"No. To keep the snow out of it."

When they arrived at the bough shelter, Norman found it covered a big hole in the lake surface. This was skimmed over with ice which the boys were obliged to cut away with an old axe that stood near, before they could dip up the water. As it was, the pails came up covered with small floating pieces of ice that clinked coldly against their sides.

"What next, Fred?" inquired Norman, as he paused with his burden at the door of the beaver house.

"Well, I've got to start a fire in the bean-hole."

"Let me help you?"

"All right, if you'd like to."

Having placed his pail of water on the shelf at the end of the sink, Norman hurried away to the big camp, where he met Fred coming out of the dingle.

"The first thing is to have some wood," announced the cookee, leading the way to the wood-pile. From this the boys loaded the large, rough-built hand-sled, which Fred called a "jumper," and hauled it carefully around the farther end of the cook's camp. Here Norman discovered two buildings which he had not seen before. One was a small, unchinked log hovel, with a four-sided roof of cedar splits, terminating in a peak which was capped by a barrel, with both ends removed. This hovel covered a large hole in the





THIS HOVEL COVERED A LARGE HOLE IN THE GROUND. — *Page 190.*







ground. The other building was a small, shed-roofed log structure, joined to the end of the main camp, and which, Fred stated, afforded sleeping quarters for the cook, it being separated from the big room by a large cretonne portiere, whose uses Norman had hitherto failed to fathom.

The big bean-hole was soon cleared of its accumulation of ashes, charred wood, and bits of charcoal, by the use of a shovel which stood beside it. Fred then kindled a roaring fire in it, the smoke from which found its way out-of-doors through the barrel chimney on the roof. Quantities of finely split hard wood were piled upon this fire, completely filling the big hole.

"This is the first step," announced Fred; "but it will be three or four hours before we are ready for the next one. I'll call you, though, when the time comes."

From the bean-hole Norman made his way to the blacksmith shop, where Ike Tapley, assisted by Baptiste Groder, was busily employed with a big broadaxe, hewing the sides of a yellow birch log with a crook at one end.

"Getting out bob-sled runners," he announced, affably, noting Norman's look of inquiry.

"I should think it was a house timber," returned Norman, with a smile.

"It does look something like it now," admitted Tapley, "but you see when I get it squared down to an eight-inch thickness, then Baptiste and I split it in



two with that rip-saw you see in the square frame, and make two runners out of it. Of course we have to shape 'em up afterwards an' iron 'em."

"Do you get your own material?" asked Norman.

"Yes. I go out in the woods and hunt it up. I have to get trees about the right size, and with the proper crooks in 'em, an' them kind ain't always so blamed easy to find."

"I shouldn't think they would be," agreed Norman.

"You see, they only use drag-sleds when they are yardin'," continued Tapley.

"I thought you called them bob-sleds," interposed Norman.

"So they are — 'cause they're so short, I s'pose. When only one is used in yardin' — the one with the tongue in it — it is called a drag-sled. You see, they only load one end of the log 'n' drag t'other. Sometimes when the trees ain't too large 'n' air handy to the yard they don't use no sled at all — just hitch on t' the log itself 'n' twitch it t' the yard. Mostly, however, they use drag-sleds. When we hitch another sled on t' the one with the tongue, connectin' of 'em, one t' t'other by crossed chains, it makes what we call a wagon-sled. Thet enables 'em t' load logs clear o' the ground. Wagon-sleds are used altogether in haulin' from th' yards t' th' landin's."

"I see," said Norman. "A front bob-sled used alone is a drag-sled. A front and a rear bob-sled hitched together with crossed chains is a wagon-sled."



"You've got th' idee, exactly," declared Tapley, in a gratified tone.

"Well, I'm glad to have learned something new," declared Norman, "and now I guess I'll get back to the beaver house and finish my work."

The first faint shadows of the approaching darkness were beginning to creep upon the little clearing, when Norman, having verified his last report, laid down his pen and stretched himself with a sigh of relief. He sat for a moment mentally reviewing the events of the past few days, and then resuming his pen, began a long letter to his father, in order that it might be taken out by Vede Pelotte Monday morning. He was busily engaged in this work when he heard Fred Warner calling him.

Hurrying outdoors, he found the cookee lugging in the direction of the bean-hole a big kettle of steaming beans, generously interlarded with layers of salt pork.

"Do you cook them in the big camp?" he asked.

"Only parboil them to make them soft," explained Fred.

Somewhat mystified, Norman followed him to the bean-hole, which he found more than half-full of glowing coals. A hole was made in the center of these, into which Fred carefully set the kettle of beans, putting a big flat rock on top of the cover to hold it securely in place. The coals were heaped up around the kettle, after which the hole was carefully filled in, from the heaps of dry earth, level with the ground.



"I should think it would put the fire out to cover it up that way," said Norman.

"It won't," assured Fred. "It's wonderful how you can hold heat by covering in a bed of coals that way. When we take those beans out in the morning they'll be swimming in pork fat and done to a turn."

"You don't appear to mind fat here," said Norman.

"The life seems to demand it," returned Fred. "Our lard bill is something enormous. I imagine it would surprise even old woodsmen if they knew how much grease they actually consume in the course of a winter."

"Fred," said Norman, abruptly, pausing a moment as they parted in front of the dingle, "I want you to share my bunk."

"You don't mean in the beaver house?"

"Yes."

"Does Billy Eustace know about it?"

"Yes. He says it's all right, and I want you to come very much."

Fred reached forward and gave Norman a hearty pressure of the hand.

"Thank you," he said, in a voice that trembled a little in spite of his effort to control it. "Thank you for thinking of me. I'll admit I sha'n't be sorry to leave the big camp. Tapley, Jim Benner, and Peters are the only ones who smoke in the beaver house, and, under the circumstances, we can have things fairly clean there."



"Don't McMurray, and Eustace, and Mr. Collins use tobacco?" asked Norman, incredulously.

"No — none of them."

"They must be exceptions to the rule, then."

"They are, decidedly."

"Well, when you're through work, Fred, bring in your dunnage" — Norman smiled at the ease with which this phrase came to his lips — "I want you to start to-night."

"All right. I'll be in as soon as we get the supper dishes washed and to-morrow's lunches put up."

Norman returned to the beaver house, where he was presently joined by Harry McMurray and Billy Eustace. They had discovered a good stand of spruce much nearer one of their established wood-roads than they had dared to hope for, and were, consequently, in the best of spirits. A little later Mr. Collins came in, looking so fresh that no one would ever have suspected from his appearance that he had snow-shoed more than twenty miles since breakfast.

Soon after, they went to supper, which the occupants of the beaver house ate at the same time with the men, one end of a table being reserved for them. As Norman came into the dingle at the close of the meal, a big hand was laid on his shoulder; and turning, he saw the swarthy, impassive face of Sol Soc bending above him.

"How likum?" he asked, gravely.

"First-rate," said Norman.



"Good," grunted Sol. "You knewum Pat Far-row?" he added, abruptly.

"What made you think so?" asked Norman, startled by the keenness of the Indian.

"Sawum in your eye."

"Yes," admitted Norman. "I had seen him before."

"Him bad man."

"That's true, Sol," said Norman, feeling instinctively that he could trust the Indian.

"Me watchum," said the Indian, and turning abruptly on his heel, he stalked away into the bunk camp, leaving Norman surprised and mystified by the interview.

When he returned to the beaver house he found that the others had gathered about the stove for an evening chat, in the only chairs — rude specimens of Ike Tapley's handiwork — that the camp boasted.

The blacksmith and Benner were, as usual, loquacious and sociable over their evening pipes. Dan Peters, a dark, taciturn, heavily bearded man, known to the crew as "Deacon," or "Noisy Dan," smoked his black clay pipe in silence, taking no part in the conversation, but following it with evident interest and enjoyment.

Members of the crew came and went, making small purchases from the wangan, or joining the group around the stove for a moment's enjoyment of the conversation. Big Pete Bedotte had planted himself in one of the chairs for the evening. He was an ardent



admirer of both Mr. Collins and Harry McMurray, and was always a frequent visitor at the beaver house when either of them was stopping there.

The yard and landing tenders brought in their "books," each of which consisted of two thin blocks of smooth pine, placed face to face and joined together at the end by a rivet, which acted also as a hinge. The two inner surfaces constituted the pages. From the data they supplied, Norman, under the direction of Eustace, made up the day's record in the log-book.

"I shouldn't think these wooden tablets would be practical," he said.

"That's where you're wrong," returned Eustace, good-naturedly. "As a matter of fact, they are very practical. When they are closed they can be carried in the pocket without any danger of getting wet, either from storms or sweat."

"But how will the men get rid of to-day's record?"

"Clean it off with sandpaper. As soon as you get it onto the log-book they have no further use for it, and are ready to begin all over again. Let me see," he questioned, "Harry called off part of these company records with you, didn't he?"

"Yes — the log-book and the time-slips."

"Well, we needn't bother to go over that again. We'll just check up the wangan account and the supply slip."

In a short time this work was completed. Soon after Fred Warner put in an appearance, carrying his



canvas extender, which he stowed away beside Norman's at the foot of their bunk.

In company with Norman and Eustace, he then joined the group about the stove, whose limited supply of chairs was supplemented by several cracker-boxes and a pickle-keg.

"When I left Ronco's cutting," Mr. Collins was saying, "I came down from the ridge and struck a bee-line for the camp. Half-way through the swamp, in a thick ash-swale, I ran plumb into a moose-yard. They had the snow tramped down all 'round, and runs leading out into the firs and cedars at the foot of the horseback."

"Yes, some of the boys told me there was a yard there," said McMurray. "Could you tell me how many there were?"

"No. The wind veered before I came within sight and they cleared out as quick as they scented me. I should judge, though, from the noise they made, that there must have been five or six of them."

"Shouldn't wonder," returned McMurray. "There's lots of game in this country. The cedar-swamps are full of deer-yards."

"Ba cripe! I t'ink eet's 'mos' tam we had som' lamb for eat," declared Pete Bedotte.

"I think not, Pete," returned the scaler, decisively. "It doesn't pay to monkey with the game-laws."

"Mebbe not," said Pete, doubtfully. "All sam' dat lamb he tas' firs' rat' in you tongue."



"You ought to scurry round, Pete, and get some bear steak," laughed McMurray. "That reminds me of the jolt Jim Cookson got last Monday over to the Beetle Brook camp. They were swamping cut a new road along the foot of that long ridge on D, and when it came time to start a fire, Jim stepped out one side to get a little kindling from an old dead stub. Before he could strike his axe into it he broke through the snow an' slid down kerslap on top of a big bear. The old fellow had a nice warm den there, all lined with moss and champed-up cedar bark. I tell you, Jim was scared. The boys said the way he scrambled out o' that hole was a caution to owls. Of course, they got a gun and killed the bear. I had some of the steak Thursday night at Gamewood siding."

"An' how did ye like it?" inquired Jim Benner.

"I didn't like it," confessed McMurray. "It was the first I ever tasted and I reckon it will be the last. Perhaps I'd have liked it better if I hadn't seen the carcass hanging up in the dingle at the Beetle Brook camp that very afternoon. He wasn't overfat, to say the least, and the way he looked with the skin off and all the muscles sticking out reminded me of a man. I took one big mouthful of him at Gamewood, and the longer I chewed the more that cud seemed to swell under my teeth. Finally I had to go outdoors and spit it out; don't think I could have swallowed it if my life depended upon it."

"Bears are not over and above good eating in the



winter," observed Mr. Collins, when the laugh occasioned by McMurray's story had subsided; "but in the fall, when they're good and fat, they make pretty fair meat."

"Not for me," returned McMurray, with decision; "I'm all done."

"I t'ink woodchuck prattee nice," observed Pete Bedotte. "W'en he got so beeg on' fat in summer tam' wit' sweet clover w'at he eat, I lak me for shoot heem. I skeen heem an' mak' heem all dress. Ma famme, he blame fin' cook, she tak' dat woodchuck, feex heem wit' nice herb, put heem on lard, bake heem on stove. Monjee! I jes' soon hav' roas' lamb as hav' heem."

"We never had 'em at my house," said Jim Benner, dryly.

"'Cept when the minister came t' dinner," corrected Ike Tapley. "Speakin' o' lawful game," he added, "what's the matter with rabbits?"

"None of them in mine," declared Billy Eustace, with emphasis. "I've eaten 'em in hot pie, with layers o' crust 'n' meat, when they tasted fairly good; but the way they cook 'em round here, well, don't say a word! It's something fierce. Felix Lamarre caught two or three dozen of 'em last winter; but I told him plainly that there'd surely be a funeral if he cooked any of 'em at the camp, so he boxed 'em up and sent them off to a brother of his up in Little Canada. He'd left the eyes in when he took off the hides, and they looked for



all the world like a parcel o' skun cats. I couldn't for the life of me see how any man could have the stomach to eat them."

"I picked up a good one on Vede Pelotte, coming in this morning," said McMurray, changing the subject.

"What was that?" inquired the scaler.

"It seems," returned McMurray, "that they had some discussion at the supper-table last night at Game-wood on this question: 'A hen lays a setting of eggs, and a duck hatches them; which is the mother of the chickens?' Opinion was pretty well divided, and so Vede thought he'd put it up to Hardy and me this morning, as we were late in getting in from Beetle Brook last night and didn't hear the discussion. He was quite prepared to let us settle it once for all. He stated it something like this: 'Hen he lay egg, duck he hatch 'em, whose goose dem be?'"

A shout of laughter greeted this story.

"Didn't get it settled, I reckon," said Benner.

"No," admitted McMurray, "the question is still open for discussion."

"Well, it's beyond me," confessed Benner.

"When are you going to start the water-cart at this camp, Harry?" inquired Mr. Collins, turning to McMurray.

"Monday morning."

"How many pairs on it?"

"Two. They're good ones, though. I expect them to-morrow. They'll weigh three thousand pounds."



"And they'll haul more logs for you than any of the teams on the wagon-sleds," declared the scaler, with conviction.

"Yes," acquiesced McMurray, "I'm a firm believer in good roads. The best is none too good. The smoother you can get 'em the more they'll save you. How much longer will it take you on those two upper yards, Billy?"

"We ought to wind up there the middle of the coming week," responded Eustace.

"Well, we'll put one of those teams to yarding that stand of spruce, and start the other to hauling to the landings. I expect also to have another team hauling to the landings a week from Monday; closed a trade with a French farmer at Aerie Lake Tuesday. He's got a corking good team, too."

"One thing is in your favor at this camp," said the scaler. "It's pretty near all down hill from the yards to the landings."

"Yes," assented McMurray, "and we've also got good straight roads. I do hate a crooked logging-road."

"Mighty expensive things," coincided Mr. Collins. "Got a good crew, have you, Billy?" he continued, turning to Eustace.

"One of the best crews I ever had," responded the camp boss, with an accent of pride. "They never say die. I think they're just as interested in getting a good cut as I am."





“ONE OF THE BEST CREWS I EVER HAD.” — *Page 202.*







"That's the kind to have," declared the scaler, approvingly.

"Hello! Here's trouble," said Eustace, in a low tone, as the door swung open to admit a dark-complexioned young man. "I'd well-nigh forgotten about that dance at Aerie Lake Monday night. Well, what's wanted, Joe?" he added, brusquely, addressing the newcomer.

"Dey wan' Pierre Daviau com' hom' rat 'way on de mornin'."

"Sure they don't want him to-night, are you?" questioned Eustace, sharply.

"No — on de mornin'," persisted the young Frenchman, doggedly.

"What's the reason?"

"Hees fader seeck."

"Very sick?"

"Ba cripe! I t'ink so. He die las' night."

"Well," returned Eustace, with resignation, "I suppose he can go; but I want him right back as quick as that dance is over. It's going to be a mighty sickly time round Aerie Lake for the next two days," he observed, gloomily, when the young Frenchman had closed the door behind him, "and I can reasonably count on at least half a dozen funerals."

"One of those dances is worse than a keg of rum to break up a logging-crew," declared McMurray.

"Has there been much liquor brought into the camps this winter?" asked the scaler.



“For the most part only what the new men fetched along on their hips,” returned McMurray, “and there wasn’t enough of that to do much mischief. I had a toter the first of the winter who smuggled a keg in here and knocked Billy out of about a day’s work. I tell you the gang had one grand soiree. You bet I discharged that toter so quick it made his ears snap. That’s one thing I like about Vede Pelotte. He doesn’t use the stuff himself, and won’t tote it for others.”

“He’s a good man to keep,” said the scaler.

“Yes,” acknowledged McMurray, “and what’s more, he knows it. There are two or three operators in this section who’d like to get him, and I’ve had to raise the rascal’s wages twice this winter in order to hold him.”

Shortly after this conversation, the men retired for the night, the lights were put out, and the occupants of the beaver house were soon wrapped in slumber.



## CHAPTER XVI

### A VISIT TO DEER TRAIL POND

Sunday was a day of rest, and, to some extent, one of recreation at Camp 4. The men were called to breakfast an hour later than usual, and the day was a somewhat listless, and, for the most part, an idle one.

Shortly after breakfast, Fred Warner entered the beaver house where Norman sat at the desk completing the letter to his father. McMurray, Eustace, and the scaler had put on their snow-shoes and started out on a long cruise immediately after breakfast. They carried lunches, and planned to be gone for the day.

As the cookee pulled his canvas extender from beneath the bench at the foot of their bunk, Norman laid down his pen, and glanced at him with sympathetic interest.

"You don't seem to get any let-up, Fred," he said. "Your work goes on Sundays just the same as other days."

"It's like a woman's — never done," said Fred.

"What have you there?" asked Norman, with sudden interest, as his bunk-mate took a small wooden object from his case.

"A barrel of gum," replied Fred, passing it over.



It was a miniature barrel, the "hoops" being carved on the wood. It had a neat little head in either end; and as he shook it, Norman saw that it was, indeed, as Fred had stated, filled with gum.

"I don't see how in the world you make them," he said, examining it critically.

"Just as easy as rolling off a log, when you know how," declared Fred. "You will notice that the sides of this little barrel are hard wood, while the ends are white pine."

"What's that got to do with making one?" demanded Norman, in some perplexity.

"It has a great deal to do with it," asserted Fred. "Come out to the blacksmith shop with me and I'll show you."

Thoroughly interested, Norman followed his friend into the log hovel where Ike Tapley plied his trade on week-days.

"Here's our start," said Fred, picking up from the long work-bench a round stick of maple about two inches in diameter. "I slipped into the woods and cut this before breakfast."

"I should think you'd wear out, Fred," declared Norman.

"It's a good deal easier to rust out," returned Fred, with a laugh. "It's worry, not work, that kills."

"What about your sled stake?" asked Norman.

"Do you see how smooth the bark is?"

"Yes."



"That shows that it is straight-grained, and free from knots."

Pausing in his explanation, Fred placed the maple stick securely in the iron vise, and cut off the end which projected beyond the bench, with a small hand-saw.

"It's necessary to start with a square end," he said.

"What next?" asked Norman, who had been eagerly following all his movements.

"Well, the next thing is to bore our hole."

He picked up a bit-stock that lay upon the bench, and leisurely fitted it with an inch-and-a-quarter bit.

"You always want to put the point of your bit, or auger, right in the pith when you bore into the end of a round stick. In that way you will not be cutting across grains, and the danger of splitting your stick won't be as great. It's a good deal easier, though, to bore a green stick than it would be a thoroughly seasoned one. You notice that I've put my stick in the vise as nearly level as possible. Now, it is necessary, in boring, for me to carry my bit equally level, so that it will follow the pith the whole distance."

Inserting the bit in the end of the stick, Fred carefully bored into it a distance of about three inches. Then, removing the bit, he took a sharp drawshave and carefully shaved off the sides of the stick, turning it in the vise as he worked, until he had reduced its diameter to an inch and three-quarters. Then, taking his hand-saw, he cut off a piece of the stick two and three-fourths inches long, and sat it on the bench.



"Looks like a wooden tube," commented Norman.

"So it is — now," assented Fred. "Later on it will be the sides of our barrel."

"Have you got your proper proportions?" asked Norman.

"Well, nearly so. I have allowed a quarter of an inch for the bulge in our barrel. When it is done the ends will finish down a quarter of an inch smaller. That will give us a barrel two and three-quarters inches high, with a diameter of an inch and a half. A regular flour-barrel is about twenty-eight inches high with a diameter of about seventeen inches on the end. You see, therefore, that our little model won't be far out of the way. Now comes the fussy part of this thing," he added, taking a jackknife from his pocket.

"What's that?" inquired Norman.

"Cutting grooves for the ends to fit into on the inside of this tube."

He worked very carefully for a few minutes, carrying his knife-blade with a steady hand, and finally laid down the tube with a sigh of relief.

"Thank goodness, that's done!" he said, as he closed his knife and returned it to his pocket. "Now to fit my ends," he continued, taking two white-pine discs from his pocket. "Hurrah! Just a pattern!" he exclaimed, jubilantly, as he pressed one of them into place in the groove at one end of the wooden tube. "Now for our merchandise," he added, as he took from his pocket a small canvas salt-bag filled



full with glistening lumps of beautiful amber-colored spruce gum.

"Isn't that beautiful!" exclaimed Norman, admiringly.

"It's number-one gum, and thoroughly cleaned," said Fred. "I must be mighty careful not to knock that head out," he added, as he carefully filled his embryo barrel with the shining lumps. Having completed this task, he pressed the remaining disc into the groove at the upper end of his tube.

"Now, we'll lay it away to dry before we attempt to put on the finishing touches," he continued, as he put the sealed tube carefully away in a cigar-box at the end of the bench.

"Aren't you afraid some one will take it?" asked Norman, apprehensively.

"No," said Fred, confidently. "Woodsmen have their faults; but stealing is very rarely one of them."

"It looks to me as if your barrel wouldn't be a very practical one," declared Norman.

"Why not?"

"If you have to be so careful in filling it to prevent your ends from falling out, no one would feel safe in handling it."

"They won't fall out when it dries," said Fred. "You see," he explained, "the sides of my barrel are made of green wood, while the ends are of thoroughly seasoned white pine, which I cut out of a board from a packing-box. As the sides dry they will contract.



The ends being already dry will remain as they are, and will be forced so tightly into the grooves at the ends of the tube that they cannot be removed without breaking them."

"Oh, I see," said Norman, admiringly.

"When it gets dry enough so that it will be safe to work with it," continued Fred, "it will be an easy matter to shape it up and carve on the hoops with a sharp knife. It makes a good whittling-job for our evenings around the stove."

"But surely you can't get them as smooth as the one you showed me, with a knife," said Norman, incredulously.

"No. The finishing touch is put on with a piece of fine sandpaper. I'm going to make you a present of the one we have just started, when I get it done."

"Thank you, Fred," said Norman, gratefully. "I shall appreciate it very much. I'm going to watch you through with this one, and then I shall try my own hand at it. If I can make a go of it, I mean to carry home a whole cargo."

"You can do it just as well as I can," declared Fred, "and now, how would you like to do your washing with me? I have a boiler full of hot water on the stove."

"I'd like to," said Norman, eagerly, "but how shall we get our things ironed?"

"We sha'n't," laughed Fred. "We must consider ourselves mighty lucky to get them washed."



A little later the boys were busily engaged in scrubbing out their clothes in the dingle, undergoing in their work considerable good-natured chaffing from members of the crew, some of whom, however, were shortly after engaged in the same task on their own account. In addition to their personal clothing, Norman and Fred improved the opportunity to wash out two of their blankets. When they had hung out their completed work on a clothes-line back of the big camp, they surveyed it with considerable satisfaction.

"There's no need of anyone's being dirty, even in a logging-camp," declared Fred, with emphasis.

"I shouldn't have agreed with you three days ago," said Norman, "but now I'm inclined to think you are right."

Shortly after dinner, while Norman was in the act of sealing up his letter to his father, Fred came into the beaver house with shining eyes.

"Hurrah!" he said; "I've got a day off. Vede Pelotte is going to do my work the rest of the day. What do you say to a snow-shoe trip into the woods?"

"I don't know," returned Norman. "I should like to go mighty well; but I suppose I ought to be within call to tend wangan."

"You needn't worry about that," spoke up Ike Tapley, who was smoking his pipe beside the stove. "I shall be here all the afternoon. Leave me your keys, and I'll take care of the wangan. I've helped Billy out all winter."



"Thank you," said Norman, gratefully. "I'm sorry to trouble you."

"No trouble at all," assured the blacksmith, heartily.

"I think we'd better go up the road a piece before we put on our snow-shoes," said Norman. "You see," he explained, "I've never had a pair on, and I'd rather not furnish the gang with a circus."

"All right," assented Fred. "We've got a mile or more to go on this logging-road anyway."

Laughing and chatting, the boys made their way between the lines of towering spruce, fir, hemlock, and cedar trees that lined either side of the road, Fred leading the way with Norman's shotgun over his shoulder.

Presently Fred stopped and took a small compass from his pocket. "I was laying out to go to Deer Trail Pond," he said, "and I reckon an east course will just about fetch us there. You see this road runs nearly north and south," he continued, balancing his compass on the palm of his hand.

"That never fools you, does it?" asked Norman, taking out his own compass. "The needles point the same way," he said, comparing it with Fred's.

"Due north, always," said Fred. "There may be times when you'll be very sure in your own mind that the needle is pointing in some other direction; but that's where you'll fool yourself. It will be north every time. Now we'll start out here and hold an east course. When we return, we'll take a west course, which should bring us to the road again."



"Here's something to light the way if it gets dark," said Norman, taking a small electric lantern from his coat-pocket.

"That's a dandy," said Fred, examining it with enthusiasm. "Works from a storage-battery, eh?"

"Yes, and can be renewed when it runs out. I brought two extra batteries with me."

Fred helped Norman strap on his snow-shoes, and facing to the right, they struck out into the deep woods.

"If you take a long, loping stride, and step a little wide, you'll be all right," declared Fred. "It will help you out a little to follow in my steps."

Norman watched his companion closely, and did his best to imitate his easy, swinging, forward gait; but was conscious that, in spite of his efforts, he was making much harder work of it. Presently, as they were passing down the descending side of a knoll, he stubbed his toe against the top of a bush and fell sprawling into the snow. He attempted to rise; but his snow-shoes had become crossed, and he found it impossible to do so. A feeling of utter helplessness came upon him; but he was too proud to call for assistance. He was still struggling to free himself, when his companion, returning from round a clump of firs which had hidden him from sight, saw his predicament.

"Hold on!" shouted Fred. "I'll fix you!" He came rapidly back to Norman, and straightened out the tangled snow-shoes. Then, holding out a hand, he helped him to his feet.



"Laugh, Fred! You've got a right to," panted Norman, as he brushed the snow from his clothes.

"I don't think you consider it a laughing matter, do you?" returned Fred.

"I never felt so helpless in my life," confessed Norman. "It seems to me as if I'd been in a pretty serious scrape if I'd been alone."

"Oh, you'd got up all right, after you'd threshed round a spell," returned Fred. "Still, I never thought it was a wise plan for a fellow to go off in the deep woods alone, although hundreds of them do it."

"You'll never catch me doing it," declared Norman, with decision.

"You'll feel differently when you get a little more used to it," laughed Fred. Starting forward again he led the way through a tangle of firs and scrub spruces, and presently emerged upon a ridge covered with hardwood growths. "I reckon we'd better rest here a spell, and give you a chance to get your breath," he said, as he brushed the snow from the top of a big windfall.

They seated themselves on the trunk of the big tree, whose gnarled limbs alone held it above the surface of the deep snow, and Norman looked out upon the scene about him in wondering silence. The mighty trees towered far above him. An ominous silence brooded over the forest, broken only by the weird refrain of a light breeze as it went moaning through the tall tops, the noisy chatter of some red squirrels,



volubly protesting against the invasion of their ancestral domain, and the impatient call of several fluffy, gray birds perched in apparent fearlessness on some small firs that stood close beside the spot where Fred and Norman were seated.

"Those birds have followed us all the afternoon," said Norman.

"Yes," assented Fred. "They always do that. They're gobbies, and mean to have our lunch."

"Gobbies?" questioned Norman.

"Yes — moose-birds, they call them round here."

"We had one of them mounted in our school collection at home, but it was called a Canada jay there."

"I reckon that's the scientific name all right," said Fred; "but no one calls 'em that here. They're knowing little fellows, but mighty greedy. They'll follow a hunter all day, and are always on hand when the crews eat their lunches in the woods."

"They are also the camp scavengers, aren't they?"

"They clean up all the waste, if that's what you mean," said Fred. "Sometimes they'll even come into the dingle and pick the fat off the sides of beef that hang there. There are not many birds that winter here — the gobbies, owls, woodpeckers, chickadees, and blue jays are about all."

"And partridges," suggested Norman.

"Yes," admitted Fred; "but it's close time on them until the middle of next September."

"What tracks are these?" asked Norman, pointing



curiously to a number of fan-shaped prints in the snow.

"Rabbits. The big broad track there is a lynx. Those little ones in pairs are squirrels. I also saw the track of a black cat back a piece."

"If you see any new ones," said Norman, "let me know. I want to learn them."

"All right."

A moment later they resumed their tramp. Coming down off the ridge they plunged into the tangled depths of a dense cedar swamp. They were in the midst of this when Norman was startled by an exclamation of surprise from Fred, who was slightly in advance, and almost immediately caught a glimpse of a large animal, which seemed to be white, go floundering away through the snow with mightly leaps.

"What was that?" he called to Warner, in dazed surprise.

"A deer," returned Fred. "There's a yard here."

Norman hurried forward to join his companion. Coming up with him, he found that the deep snow had been tramped down over quite a section of the swamp. The foliage had been browsed off the cedars in this section to an astonishing height, and it was evident from a runway tramped out towards another part of the swamp that the deer had already extended their works in that direction. "Most of 'em went down that way," said Fred, pointing to this runway; "but I reckon I must have headed off the one you saw."



"Just look at the trail he left," said Norman, pointing to the big holes in the snow.

"They leave their mark in the snow, all right," assented Fred.

"The one I saw was white," declared Norman.

"I reckon he was mostly light tan," said Fred, skeptically. "You saw his flag."

"What's that?"

"His tail. The under part is white, and when a deer is running away with his flag straight up, and all brushed out, it looks as if that was pretty much all there was to him."

"But there are white ones, aren't there?" persisted Norman.

"Yes. There's an occasional albino; but they are more often read about than seen."

"You're probably right, Fred," admitted Norman; "but I certainly thought he was white. I should think it would be pretty easy to get deer in the yards," he added.

"It is," assented Fred. "When the snow is deep a man on snow-shoes has them almost at his mercy. It's the meanest kind of poaching to kill them then."

Once through the swamp they made their way again up the steep sides of a ridge into hardwood growth — beech, birch, and maple.

"These are the old, original growths," said Fred.

"The hard wood has never been cut in this section."

"What is that monster over there?"



"A yellow birch."

"My! but isn't it a monarch!" exclaimed Norman, gazing in awe at the towering trunk.

"Trees grow high in the deep woods," observed Fred. "They have to in order to overreach the smaller growths, and get the sunlight. It's a constant struggle for existence. In the clearings they run more to top and less to trunk."

"How many kinds of birch are there?"

"There are the white birch, the gray birch, the yellow birch, and the black or red birch round here."

"They don't tap them for gum, do they?"

"So Benner tried that chestnut on you, did he?" laughed Fred. "No, I don't reckon we'd get much gum from hard wood. They do make a very fair quality of vinegar, though, from yellow-birch sap."

Passing over the ridge they made their way down a steep hill, and stood on the edge of a broad, snow-clad plain.

"Deer Trail Pond," announced Fred, briefly.

"And that, I suppose, is the sporting-camp I've heard Pete Bedotte speak about," said Norman, pointing to a trim-looking house of peeled logs, with a broad piazza in front, that stood in a clump of firs on a narrow point of land making out into the pond.

"Yes. That's Isaac Solstein's place."

"Somebody's here ahead of us," said Norman, pointing to two men who were busily engaged in fishing through the ice.



"They had some shoveling to do to reach the surface of the pond," declared Fred, pointing to the pile of snow that surrounded the hole.

"And they take turns thawing out," said Norman, with a glance at the blazing fire, which was burning a short distance away in a big hole it had melted in the snow. "Who are they?"

"The one by the fire is Baptiste Groder. I can't see the face of the one handling the lines. Why," he exclaimed, as the fisherman suddenly straightened up, and cast a lowering glance in their direction, "it's that freak they codfished the other night."

"Clouter Kelty!" burst involuntarily from Norman's lips.

"No," corrected Fred. "It's Pat Farrow."

"I don't want any part of him," declared Norman, warmly.

"Nor I, either," coincided Fred. "Let's clear out."

They were about to act on this suggestion, when they were arrested by a cordial hail from Baptiste Groder.

"Bonjour, boys!" he shouted. "Come rat down wit' you an' mak' youse'fs be warm on de fire."



## CHAPTER XVII

### CRIMINATION AND RECRIMINATION

Somewhat reluctantly, Norman and Fred made their way along the surface of the pond, and joined Baptiste before the blazing fire.

"What luck?" asked Fred, as they paused before its cheerful glow.

Baptiste proudly displayed a crotched birch withe, upon which were strung half a dozen beautiful square-tailed trout, the largest of which would probably weigh a pound and a half.

"How dat — heh?" he asked.

"Great!" declared Fred, sententiously.

"Oh, aren't they beauties!" cried Norman, enthusiastically.

"Ba cripe! I t'ink so," declared Baptiste, highly gratified. "Dey ban ole whoppers w'at mak' you laugh youse'f on you' face for see. We cook heem. We come prepare," he added, affably, displaying a long-handled frying-pan and a big junk of pork, which he pulled very proudly from under a pile of boughs near the fire.

"Got wood enough?" asked Fred.

"Plaintee!"



"All sawed to size!" pursued Fred, as he glanced at the sticks piled up by the fire.

"Dere ban whole shed full up on shaintee," said Baptiste easily, pointing towards the sporting-camp.

"But that isn't ours," protested Fred.

"I t'ink so now. M'sieu Solstein tol' me las' fall for help mase'f," declared Baptiste, glibly.

Fred shot an incredulous glance at Norman, but forbore to pursue the subject further.

At that moment the fisherman approached the fire, bearing another trout.

"Hello, boys," he said, with an attempt at cordiality.

"Hello, Pat," responded Fred; while Norman nodded a little stiffly, not trusting himself to speak.

"Take off your snow-shoes," insisted the bogus Farrow; "sit down by the fire, and help eat these trout."

The boys removed their snow-shoes and used them for seats on the snowbank before the fire.

Norman was uneasily conscious that the desperado was watching him closely out of the corners of his eyes, and fancied that he saw a hard look come into his face. If, however, Kelty harbored any suspicions, it was evident that he was doing his best to keep the boys from suspecting it. He busied himself with the pork and frying-pan while Baptiste and the boys carried the trout to the hole in the ice, and carefully dressed them, first dipping out and carrying back to the fire the water for their tea, in a small lard-pail which Baptiste had brought along with him.



Soon the tea was boiling and the trout merrily sizzling over the hot coals.

The tin dippers and lunches which they had brought with them were spread out on a table of boughs; and with their hunting-knives for tableware, the members of the ill-assorted party sat down to a "feed" which the others coincided with Norman in pronouncing "fit for a king."

"We've got to make tracks if we get any sort of a start before dark," remarked Fred, with a glance at the sun, as they hastily gathered up their things at the close of their repast.

"We mak' dat upper log-road 'fore dark," said Baptiste, easily.

"That's a good road now," added Farrow. "Noisy Peters is hauling over it to the upper landing."

"It's the longest way round," objected Fred.

"Never you mind," returned Farrow, curtly. "It's sure to be the nearest way home on a dark night. What a bloomin' shame it is," he pursued, "that gents like us should have to eat in the open, while that old Sheeny has a joint over there that would give us just th' layout we'd like. I'd like to know what right he has to lock up a shack in the woods anyway."

"Oh, I guess he's got right enough, bein' as he owns the land," said Fred.

"Well, he's no part of a man to do it, if he has," grumbled Farrow.

Resuming their snow-shoes, the members of the



party struck rapidly through the woods, Baptiste Groder leading the way. They had not yet reached the logging-road before darkness began to shut down upon them, and "the many-voiced night of the woods" brought with it a weird sense of vastness and solitude. The sombre spell of its mystery was upon them all, as they moved silently along among the tangled growths, through which Baptiste picked his way with the unconscious skill of the trained woodsman.

Presently he paused a moment.

"I t'ink we 'mos' dere," he said.

"You would have to take a southwest course to hit that road, wouldn't you?" asked Fred.

"Yass — I t'ink so."

"Let's take a look at my compass. Just give me a little light here, Norman."

As Norman, complying with this request, stepped to Fred's side and flashed his electric light upon his compass, the other members of the party were outspoken in their admiration.

"If I hadn't been dopy I'd thought to bring one of those fellers along with me," declared Farrow.

"Dat wan grande, firs'-rat' t'ing," asserted Baptiste.

"I judge you're pulling a little too much into the south," said Fred.

"Yass, I t'ink so," coincided Baptiste, after looking at the compass.

He struck out again at a pace which made it difficult for Norman to keep up with the others, although he



had, in a large measure, acquired the knack of handling his snow-shoes. He was too proud, however, to ask for a slower pace, although he was secretly grateful to Fred when, on several occasions, he asked Baptiste to stop and wait for him. Once, as he passed under a big hemlock, his heart seemed to come into his throat, when a hoarse hoot sounded dismally over his head. He felt ashamed of his fears, however, when, glancing up, he saw the big yellow eyes of an owl gleaming balefully in the darkness. One by one the stars came out, and glittered brightly in the cold sky. Over the tall tops of the spruces the crescent of the rising moon was beginning to show, when Baptiste led his companions out of a tangled windfall into the logging-road.

"Hooraw! Here she ban," he announced, in a tone of relief, as he paused and wiped his perspiring face with a bandanna handkerchief.

"Yes. I surmise she stays here most of the time," said Farrow, dryly.

"It will be easy from here," remarked Fred to Norman. "This road leads down to the upper landing. All we have to do is to follow the lake-shore road from there, and it will bring us back to the camp."

"Let's get on de gam'," said Baptiste, when the members of the party had removed their snow-shoes, and, again shouldering the axe he was carrying, he started at a rapid pace down the logging-road, with Fred Warner close at his heels. Norman, unused to



long jaunts, and already weary from his tramp, found himself unable to keep up with them. As he lagged more and more to the rear he was somewhat disconcerted to find that Farrow kept close to his side. For a time they plodded along without speaking. Presently the outlaw broke the silence.

"You know me," he said, in cold, even tones.

"Yes," admitted Norman.

"I thought that mug of yours looked natural the first night I watched you at supper," pursued Kelty. "I didn't have much chance to get real well acquainted with you the last time we met."

"No," admitted Norman, coolly. "You appeared somewhat pressed for time."

"It's better to be pressed than pinched," said Kelty, bitterly. "It wasn't your fault, though, that I didn't stay longer with you."

"No," returned Norman, with exasperating calmness. "I was in hopes to have seen more of you."

As he spoke he heard the desperado grit his teeth, and felt that his small, weasel-like eyes were resting upon him with furtive malice.

"You're a cool one!"

Kelty's voice carried the effect of a sneer.

"Why haven't you peached on me?" he demanded. "Why haven't you shown me up and claimed the reward?"

"I didn't wish to."

"Ah! You'd better not. This country will be a



good deal more healthy for you if you don't," hissed Kelty, fiercely. "You've got a little burglar record of your own. Ah, ha! You needn't jump. I'm on. Understand? I'm on. Now, pal, I don't think it would be wise for either of us to know much history. Where ignorance is bliss, it's only an ass who'd care to be wise."

He paused and leered at Norman out of the corners of his eyes.

"I think," he concluded, in a tone of covert threat, "that you and I have a pretty distinct understanding. You curry my horse, and I'll curry yours. See? Meanwhile, you probably won't hanker for my society, and I guess I can worry along without yours."

"What do you mean?" gasped Norman, amazed at the man's effrontery. "Do you insinuate that I'm a fugitive from justice?"

"No, indeed!" sneered Kelty. "The idea! You simply tore yourself away from the Four Hundred at this sultry season of the year, and came down here in the woods in search of health. The doctors all said it was necessary for you to escape the wintry heat and dust of the great city, and your folks were entirely willing to forfeit the bail. I understand your case, exactly. I had the papers while I was locked up, and I read 'em, too, very, very carefully, especially the police and court records. I always did take to that sort of news. See?"

"Didn't you know that I — I — was discharged —



that the case against me was dropped?" demanded Norman, white with passion.

"You had powerful and influential friends at court — church deacons and such like," said Kelty. "Oh, I saw 'em there," he insisted, as Norman started to break in upon him. "I know the stripe. I've been round the block once and half-way back again. I've no doubt they arranged for you to go leisurely out at the front door of the court-house, while I was obliged to take a somewhat hasty departure from the back one; but we're on the same footing. We both find this woods life good for our complexions."

He threw back his head and gave vent to a low chuckle, in which were mingled satisfaction, insolence, and hatred. It acted upon Norman like an electric shock.

"Look here," he began, sharply, straightening up with a snap, and looking the desperado full in the face in the moonlight.

"My name is Farrow," interposed Kelty.

"Well, Farrow," repeated Norman, "I've never called you anything else."

"And it wouldn't be wise for you to."

"I want you to understand, once for all, that there's nothing you can tell concerning me that will hurt me in the least. Furthermore, I have the utmost contempt for you and your threats. I am not afraid of you."

"No?" sneered Kelty.

"No," responded Norman, coolly. "You can



threaten and bully, and spit out your venom as much as you like; but you can't intimidate me."

"I suppose you would like to have me tell all about your experience as a burglar?" sneered Kelty. "It's not so long a one as mine, perhaps; but it was fairly strenuous while it lasted."

"No," returned Norman, "I did not say that it would be pleasant to have that escapade known here; but I did say that it would in nowise hurt me. If you think you would enjoy telling it, you are at perfect liberty to do so."

"You're a nervy little devil," conceded Kelty, "and I can't help liking you a little for it; but bluffs don't go with me. See?"

"I see nothing to fear," rejoined Norman. "Nothing you can tell will seriously affect me, for the matter is all settled and closed. I know, as you know, that one word from me establishing your identity would send you to prison, perhaps to the electric chair —"

A distinct gasp came from Kelty.

"So if you're wise — and, while I know you're a knave I never thought you were a fool — you'll drop all insinuations and bluster and bluff when you're talking with me. I simply won't stand to be bullied, or threatened, or browbeaten. I know what your record is, and I know why you're skulking."

"Skulking!" echoed Kelty, hoarsely. "Skulking! Just think of men of our ability burying ourselves in this living tomb and doing slaves' work."



"I don't think it will hurt either of us to work for our living any more than other folks — although I imagine the experience is somewhat new for you."

"I certainly admire your nerve," declared Kelty, sharply. "You — who didn't even do your stealing for a living."

Norman winced perceptibly under this thrust. More than ever before, he regretted the foolish escapade that had laid him open to it.

"I certainly never converted another man's property to my own uses," he said, coldly. "I did make the mistake of borrowing once; but the property was returned and the owner made no charges against me."

Norman's tone carried conviction. Kelty was disagreeably forced to the conclusion that his power over the boy beside him was far less than he had supposed.

"Why did you come here?" he demanded, brusquely.

"Why, father felt that the change of companionship and surroundings would be good for me. It's my first experience in the woods — but not yours."

Kelty was visibly affected by this statement.

"What makes you think that?" he asked, uneasily.

"The way you've taken hold of your work here. The men agree that you're an old hand."

"So you've discussed me with the men, have you?"

"No, but I've heard the men discuss you with one another."

"Well, what if I am an old hand?" demanded Kelty. "Is there anything wrong in that?"



"It depends a good deal upon the kind of record you made."

Kelty pressed forward, and laid a shaking hand upon Norman's shoulder.

"For God's sake, Carver!" he pleaded in wheedling tones; "don't squeal on me. Give me another chance."

"Let's have no misunderstandings, Kel — er — Farrow," said Norman. "I'm not a detective, and I certainly have no desire to interfere with you, so long, at least, as you behave yourself, and let me severely alone."

"That's straight, is it?" asked Kelty, in a tone of relief.

"I mean just what I say," asserted Norman.

"Shake!" said Kelty, extending his hand.

"I prefer not to," returned Norman. "I don't care to have anything in common with you, for I am convinced that if it were not for your fear of recapture you would even now be up to your old tricks again."

"Well, let it go at that," returned Kelty. "I've got my good qualities as well as my bad ones. Reckon there's some Injun in me. I say to you now, Carver, man to man, that if you keep my secret you will never lose anything by it."

They had been walking along briskly as they talked, and presently the flickering lights of the camp clearing came in sight. As Norman paused at the door of the beaver house, Kelty spoke again.

"Good-night," he said, abruptly.



"Good-night," returned Norman.

For a moment after the outlaw had passed into the dingle, Norman stood gazing after him. "How difficult it is," he reflected, "to outlive the consequences of a wrong act."

With a sigh, he turned and entered the beaver house, where he found the rest of its occupants assembled about the stove enjoying their evening chat.

As usual, logging operations came in for a large share of the discussion.

"What should you estimate the total timber cut in the State this year, Mr. Collins?" asked Harry McMurray.

"Well, conditions have been unusually favorable this winter, and I rather look for a total cut of fully 800,000,000," responded the scaler.

"What do you think the annual growth of timber in the State is?"

"Well, I should estimate it about 700,000,000."

"So you think we are gradually exhausting our forests?"

"Yes," returned Mr. Collins. "You must know, yourself, that we are cutting constantly smaller and smaller trees — and cutting them with comparatively little improvement over the wasteful methods of our fathers. We are taking everything pretty clean, without much regard to size, that is close to our established logging-roads, and letting 'most everything else go. We need more intelligent and more scientific handling



of our forests. It is wonderful, though, how our Maine forests hold out. I remember when I was a boy, my father was interested with others in a sawmill, and they had it all figured out just when the supply of timber was going to be exhausted. The time they set has gone by years ago, and we are getting bigger cuts than ever, so I calculate that it would not be safe or wise for me to venture any predictions along that line."

"One thing I know," declared McMurray; "the cost of getting timber is steadily increasing. My father would never have dreamed of yarding logs with the snow as deep as it is to-day; but we feel that we can afford to do a considerable amount of shoveling in getting our sawlogs, when lumber is bringing the high prices it is to-day."

Shortly before the lights were blown out, Fred Warner came to Norman, as he sat at the desk, with an old and somewhat soiled blank-book in his hand.

"I wish you would set me some copies in this when you have time," he said. "I haven't much spare time here; but what little I have I mean to make count. I see that you write a fine hand, and can help me a good deal. If I can get some one to help us out on the farm, I mean to go to our district school next summer. I want also to go to the Academy at Bolton, a part, if not the whole, of the fall term."

"I'm glad to hear you talk that way, Fred," said Norman, "but it makes me mightily ashamed of the opportunities I've wasted."



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE SAD FATE OF DOG 'POLEON

“And now for our first lesson in saw-filing,” announced Billy Eustace, when he and Norman returned to the beaver house after breakfast Monday morning. “I’m going to file three, and after I’m gone Tapley will file two more. That will be a new one for each crew to-morrow morning. Tapley has been doing a large part of the filing this winter, with what help I have been able to give him. He is so busy now fitting up wagon-sleds for hauling, that I feel as if we ought to take this work off from him as soon as possible.”

Fixing one of the long saws in the big wooden vise, Eustace carefully explained to Norman all the processes of filing, showing him also how to handle the little iron gauge used to determine the evenness of the “set,” or alignment of teeth. He had his pupil use one of the files under his direction, and was much gratified both by Norman’s eagerness to master the work, and the aptitude he displayed for it.

“You’ll do,” he declared, briefly.

“I don’t know,” said Norman, doubtfully. “Ike Tapley says it’s a knack to file a woods saw right.”



"So it is," admitted Eustace, "but he's not the only one that's learned to do it, and I shouldn't wonder a mite if there'd be others after he's gone. It's mighty likely to happen so."

"I'll do my best," declared Norman.

"Yes, and you'll tumble onto the knack of it almost before you know it. You better not let the men know you are doing it. Sawyers are apt to be cranks on that point. It would surprise you how bad those saws would get, the minute they discovered that some new man was filing them. Now I'm going to leave you this old one. When you've seen Ike file his two you can come back here and practice on it — and I'll look it over with you to-night."

After Eustace was gone, Norman made his way to the blacksmith shop, where Tapley was waiting to give him further instructions. "Pokerface" Ike had the reputation of being an expert in this work, and Norman found him a very good teacher.

After one saw had been filed, Tapley told Norman to do the second, instructing him and guiding him as he went along.

When Norman returned to the beaver house to still further try his new art upon the old saw that had been left him, he felt well satisfied that he would, in a short time, be capable of performing creditably this task, which at the first had loomed up before him like a mountain of difficulty.

When he had slowly and carefully completed this



work, he surveyed it with considerable satisfaction. He was very sure in his own mind that it would meet with the approval of Billy Eustace, who, he felt, would scarcely expect as good results from a first attempt.

Taking the water-pail from the sink-shelf, after he had removed the saw from the vise and stood it in a corner, Norman made his way down to the water-hole in the lake. Here, putting down his pail, he paused to watch the movements of Jim Benner, who was at work a short distance away on the landing.

As yet the pile of logs, destined to assume giant proportions before the ice went out in the spring, from its gathering in of the yards, was only fairly started. It stood at the foot of a long sloping bank down which the logs were rolled onto the skids that ran crosswise of the different layers or decks.

As Norman watched, he saw a team drive up with a load of logs. It was a powerful pair of dapple-grays, weighing more than three thousand pounds; and as the teamster brought them to a standstill in front of the landing, Norman was dumfounded to recognize the villainous face of Clouter Kelty. As the new teamster unchained his logs and, picking up a peavey, helped Benner roll them upon the landing, it was evident that his present calling was by no means new to him. He handled himself with the skill of a veteran, and Norman, in spite of his dislike for him, could not help admiring his splendid physical development.

After the logs were unloaded and Kelty had passed



out of sight behind a fringe of heavy firs and cedars that grew close down to the lake shore, Norman made his way to the landing.

"Howdy', bub!" was Benner's greeting, when he glanced up from his work and saw the new clerk almost at his elbow.

"Hello!" returned Norman; "got a new teamster?"

"Yes, a force-put. T'other fellow jacked his job this mornin'. Blamed if I don't believe this skunk of a Farrow will hold down th' job. He's driv' team afore, sure's you're born."

"It looked like it," acquiesced Norman.

"Thet 'ere cuss can't help lookin' at me out o' th' corner of his eyes ever since I gin 'im thet codfish," pursued Benner. "Lord! Doesn't he just hate me, though! He'll never forgive me for thet larrupin' I gin 'im. I reckon he found out thet it doesn't pay to git too flip in a loggin'-crew."

"He doesn't look as if he loved anyone very much."

"Includin' of himself," added Benner. He paused, seated himself on a log, and, producing a well-blackened corn-cob pipe from his pocket, placed it in his mouth. Then, opening a jack-knife, he cut a number of thin slices of tobacco from a black plug, and crumbled them reflectively between his palms. Holding the pipe, its bowl encircled by his little finger, in the same palm with his tobacco, he slowly filled it, pressing down the odorous charge with the gnarled and cal-



loused forefinger of his other hand. It was evident that this important operation was always a period of mental rumination with old Jim Benner, and Norman wisely forbore to interrupt the current of his reflections. Presently, having lighted his pipe, blown a few vigorous puffs into the air, and spat meditatively against the end of a log, Benner broke the silence.

"Blamed if I can get it out o' my head thet I've seen this Farrow before," he said. "I lumbered in Wisconsin one winter, 'n' there was a human hyena there es killed a boss in a camp near us. Stabbed him with a dirk-knife. I'd seen the feller over to our shack once or twice of a Sunday, but hadn't scraped up any acquaintance with 'im. I helped hunt for 'im, though, after he done the murder. We had a rope with us, an' I don't think he'd have traveled much farther — if we'd ketched 'im, but he cheated us by gittin' drowned."

"Getting drowned?"

"Yes. Broke through the thin ice in the pond. They found his body later in the spring arter the ice went out."

"What was his name?" questioned Norman.

"He called himself Ben Fargo, an' d'ye know, I never look at this cuss Farrow, but what I'm reminded of 'im. I reckon thet's what makes me so suspicious. Any man, in my jedgment, what sports a murderous mug like thet ought t' be jailed at once on gin'ral principles."



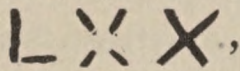
"Do they keep you pretty busy here?" asked Norman, changing the subject.

"No. Softest snap I've hed this winter. I've pretty nigh worn out the seat o' my trousers already, 'n' thet's a thing Harry McMurray doesn't intend for any of his men t' do. Makes me feel guilty es thunder — still I'm gettin' things blocked out 'bout right an' there'll be plenty o' jumpin' t' do when they git a few more teams a-haulin from th' yards."

He picked up a light axe and started cutting on the side of one of the logs.

"What are you doing there?" asked Norman, with interest.

"I'm markin' this log. The Lakeland Lumber Company doesn't own all the sawmills on these 'ere waters — not by any means. These marks are what enable them to tell their logs from some other feller's. Every operator has his own log-mark an' has it registered in th' registry o' deeds office, in the county where they cut their logs, 'n' agin in the county where they hev their main office — in case it happens to be a different one. There!" he added, pausing from his labors; "I'll bet ye a dime nobody'll ever scratch thet off with his shoe-calks."

"What does that mean?" asked Norman, looking somewhat dubiously at the cabalistic characters, , which the veteran woodsman had cut in the log.

"Wal," explained Benner, "thet, being elucefied,



means L, turtle, cross. It's the log-mark o' the Lakeland Lumber Company."

"So those four marks are a turtle, are they?" commented Norman. "I see his legs, but where's his body?"

"It's thar, even though ye can't see it," responded Benner. "Thet's where it differs from the pea under th' walnut-shell."

"So you think the pea isn't apt to be under the walnut-shell?" questioned Norman.

"Wal, I never succeeded in findin' it thar," returned Benner, dryly.

"What's to prevent some other operator from using the same mark?" asked Norman.

"Nothin', only as it was registered first by the Lakeland Lumber Company, he'd hev t' wait till we picked out our count in case of a mix-up, afore he could come into the deal. Operators hain't gin'rally hankerin' arter them kind o' complications."

"Jim!" said Norman, with a sudden impulse; "I want you to look out for Farrow. He's a bad man. He hates you, and I believe he intends to do you harm."

"Bless ye, youngster!" returned the veteran, evidently touched by this warning. "Don't ye worry yer head 'bout me. I allus hev an axe an' a peavey nigh et hand, 'n' I reckon I can take keer o' myself."

Norman returned to the water-hole, and, filling his pail, carried it back to the beaver house. The more he thought over what Benner had told him, the more



the conviction grew upon him that the murderer Ben Fargo had not been drowned, and that he and Kelty, alias Farrow, were one and the same man.

That night the beaver house was without the presence of Mr. Collins and Harry McMurray, both of whom were pursuing their labors at some of the other camps. Billy Eustace expressed himself well pleased with the old saw Norman had filed.

"I've had fellers work at it for a month," he declared, "who couldn't begin to do so good a job."

For an hour or more, Norman sat before the desk, copying the record of the day's cut and haul into the log-book, and occasionally pausing to give a suggestion to Fred Warner, who sat on the top of a nail keg at one end of the inclined shelf, laboriously trying to imitate in his blank book the copy Norman had set for him.

Presently, Norman became conscious of someone standing near him, and looking up, found big Pete Bedotte regarding him intently.

"Anything wanted, Pete?"

"Yass. Gass I have wan leetle plug chewing-tobac for put on ma mout'."

Norman rose up from the desk and opened one of the wangan chests. Taking from it a long strip of black-colored tobacco, he sliced off a two-inch piece with the cutter and made an entry on the wangan book.

He glanced awry at the big Frenchman — who



promptly bit off a big piece from his new plug — and then locking up the big chest, returned to the desk and resumed his work.

Presently he and Fred were gathered about the stove with “Pokerface” Tapley, “Deacon” Peters, Jim Benner and Billy Eustace. Big Pete Bedotte, having exchanged his cud for a pipe, was also favoring the members of the beaver house with his presence.

“Yass,” he was saying, as the boys pulled their seats into the circle. “Dat wan grande load. W’en we got where dat road was go oop, we tak’ off som’ dose t’ings — som’ quarterre beef an’ noder t’ings. I hide me behin’ som’ box w’at ban full wit’ crackerre. Prattee soon fox he com’ sneak down off dat reedge, so sly lak nevaire was. Win’ she blow jus’ rat way, so he couldn’t ban for smell on me. He com’ rat oop. He poke hees nose round cornerre dat box. Ba cripe! I grab ma gun. I smash hees face rat een.”

“You’d better bought a dog, Pete,” remarked Benner.

“I tole you ’bout wan fir-r-s rat dog w’at I own me wan tam’,” said Pete, responding with enthusiasm to the suggestion. “Ma dog she name ’Poleon. He wan — w’at you say? — er retrieverre. He sweem on de waterre. He tak’ som’ nice, fat duck, w’at I shoot in hees mout’. He breeng dem on ma foot, an’ wag hees tail. Ba gosh! Dat mos’ cleveres’ dog w’at I nevaire saw me. Wan day I go for hunt. Tak’ ’Poleon wit’ me. Mon Dieu! how glad dat leetle dog



was ban. He jomp me all around. He scratch oop de dirt on hees toe. He bark heemse'f on hees face. He steeck oop hees tail jus' lak wan flag-pole. He race all 'round in wood jus' lak he ban crazee!

“Prattee soon I com' wit' mase'f w'ere reever skeep down de beeg ledge an' mak' wan grande pool — so clear jus' lak it was ban on wan deepper. I look down. See ev'yt'ing jus' lak wan meerror. All de nice clean leetle rock on bottom — an' wan honder — mebbe two — de bes' leetle trout w'at I evaire was saw. I tole you dey was ban beeg fellaire. Som' weigh dem mos' two poun' 'leven inches — mebbe more. Ba cripe! Dey was make me waterre on ma mout'.

“I say me, I t'ink I put som' dem trout in fire, an' fry dem on pan. So I tak' wan steeck dynamite out me pocquette. I light me de waterre-proof fuse. I t'row eet in waterre. Ba tonder! dat leetle dog 'Poleon he jomp rat een prattee queeck. He sweem w'ere dat steeck dynamite ban. I hollar jus' loud w'at I can: 'Sapre! Com' back, 'Poleon; w'at for you go for dat? Com' back, you leetle rascal! Com' back, you!'

“He ban so excite he pay no attention for what I say. He kep' rat on. He grab dynamite een hees mout'. He sweem for shore. Monjee! I was ban scare. I nearly tak' de fit. 'Go back, 'Poleon! Go back!' I yell; but, ba Joe! he feel so nice he kep' rat on. Hees leetle eye all shine — he t'ink he do me wan smart treeck. Ba golly! I t'ink ma time was come. Dat 'Poleon reach de shore. I geeve me wan grande



yell. I feel I was los'. Ma hair stan' oop rat top ma hat. I ronne, but dat 'Poleon com' affter jus' fas' he can. I jomp on win'fall. He skeep heem rat under. I know dat fuse was mos' burn off. Merci! I jomp behin' beeg hemlock. I close ma eye. I say ma prayer. Prattee queeck come wan grande, beeg roar jus' lak tonderre. I fall on groun'. I t'ink I ban dead man for sure. Bamby I open ma eye. I peek me rat out behin' dat tree. Ba gar! I ban so glad for be alive I jomp on top ma foot. I shout 'Hooraw!' Den I was dance, an' laugh, an' cry me upon ma eye. An' 'Poleon? Monjee! Poor leetle fellaire! I was nev-aire see heem agen. He ban scatter heemse'f all roun' ovaire dat townsheep. I nevaire even found me so moche wan leetle hair on top hees tail."

The members of the group made it clear to Pete that they were duly impressed with the harrowing fate of little dog 'Poleon, and presently the big fellow started to leave the beaver house. With his hand on the door, he paused, arrested by a sudden thought, and slowly came back to the group around the stove.

"You got wan leetle lantern, M'sieu Carvarre, w'at you light wit' you feenger?" he asked.

"I have something that answers a little to that description," returned Norman.

"You jus' soon I ban see heem?"

"Certainly."

Norman rose from his seat and pulled his canvas extender from under the bench at the foot of his bunk.



He opened it, rummaged about for a few moments, and then gave vent to a low whistle of dismay.

"Anything wrong?" asked Eustace.

"I've been robbed, that's all," responded Norman. "My electric pocket-lantern, my hunting-knife, and my compass are all gone."

"Ba cripe! I gass we hav' wan beeg t'ief on de camp," declared Pete.

"Looks that way," coincided Eustace, whose face looked decidedly disturbed and anxious. "This is something new in Camp 4. Look a little further, Norman, and see if you miss anything else."

"Air ye sartin sure ye put thet ere stuff in the extender?" asked Benner, in a skeptical tone.

"I'm sure of it," declared Norman, positively. "You remember, Ike, I showed you that electric lantern just as I was putting it away. You had it in your hand, while I was cutting off that tobacco for Pat Farrow."

"That's a fact," corroborated Tapley.

"By Jim Hill!" exclaimed Eustace, who had been running his eye over the contents of the camp. "That isn't all he stole, either."

"What else is gone?" inquired "Deacon" Peters, aroused from his customary reticence by the unwonted excitement of the occasion.

"Well, my Winchester rifle, for one thing," returned the camp boss, in a perturbed voice. "She was here this morning. Where's your shotgun, Carver?"



"Gone," reported Norman, with a glance at the corner behind the bunk, where he had last stood it.

"Ba golly! dat mos' ban beeg t'ief for lug so moche!" exclaimed Pete.

"Where's Harry McMurray's extra pair o' snow-shoes?" inquired Benner.

"I don't know," declared Eustace. "Didn't he take them along with him?"

"No," said Tapley. "I was in here about seven o'clock, to get some tobacco I'd left, and I remember seeing 'em hanging on that peg by the door. There was a rivet out o' the hind part o' one, an' I remember o' thinkin' es how I'd put it back the first chance I got."

"That tells the story," declared Eustace. "Someone has lifted 'em. When were you out, Norman?"

"I was in blacksmith shop with Ike for an hour or so, after you left. Following that, I came back and worked here an hour or more. Then I went down to the landing to get some water and see Farrow and Jim roll a load of logs onto the landing."

"What did Farrow do after he unloaded his logs?"

"Went right back to the yard again. I stopped and chatted a few minutes with Jim, and then I came back here. Of course I was out again at dinner-time — perhaps a half an hour."

"Whoever stole this stuff must have done so either when you were in the blacksmith shop or on the landing. It was a mighty nervy piece of work, and the



infernal scoundrel certainly seems to have got away with it."

Eustace paused, his jaws came together with a snap, and there was a determined gleam in his blue eyes.

"I'm going to get to the bottom of this business," he announced, with quiet decision, "if it takes my winter's pay."



## CHAPTER XIX

### NORMAN UNDER SUSPICION

Great excitement was created among the men in the big camp, when Pete Bedotte brought the news of the astounding thefts that had been committed in the beaver house.

There was an immediate overhauling of personal effects which only resulted in showing that the miscreant, whoever he might be, had not ventured into the big camp, where he would have stood a chance of being seen by Felix Lamarre or Fred Warner.

Having relieved their minds as to the safety of their own property the men sat round upon the bunks and deacon seats and discussed the occurrence. Indignation ran high against the rascal who had perpetrated the outrage, and he would have fared hard at that moment had he fallen into the hands of these rough and excited woodsmen.

"A man who would do a thing like that," declared Pat Farrow, with an oath, "ain't fit to lug bones to a bear," and it was very evident that he voiced the sentiment of the camp.

For several days after this a sharp lookout was kept for further depredations, but none occurred.



"I surmise es how it might a-b'en some feller from th' back settlement," declared Jim Benner, as the mystery came up for its usual discussion in the beaver house one evening.

"How'd he come here?" demanded Eustace, incredulously.

"Drove down probably t' sell some oats. Found no one round. Gathered up what he could 'n' cleared out."

"Yes," said Norman, "but how do you account for his opening up my extender, and taking out that compass and electric lantern? If it had been some fellow driving in on the tote-road he wouldn't have stopped to pick out special articles. He'd have taken the whole thing."

"Sure es preachin'," agreed Ike Tapley. "The fact, too, thet he took them particular things leads me t' suspect thet he knew ye had 'em 'n' thet they was in your extender."

"You're right, Ike," declared Eustace, with conviction. "I'm well satisfied that the thief is right here in this crew; but where the dickens he could 'a' stowed away all that plunder is what beats me."

"The best thing t' do is jest t' lay low for a spell," declared Jim Benner, oracularly. "Murder will out, ye know, 'n' sooner or later we're sartin sure t' ketch thet cuss, 'n' bring 'im up with a good, round turn."

This view of the situation was the one that prevailed with the crew. Every one was on the alert to find



some clue to the thief. Meanwhile no one in the crew felt quite sure of his neighbor, and every man had an uncomfortable feeling that he was being watched.

Days came and went, however, with no further depredations, and the episode dropped gradually out of mind.

Norman had become so proficient in saw-filing that practically all of this work had fallen to him. This had gone on for nearly a fortnight before any of the sawyers found it out. When they discovered it, however, they immediately sent Pierre Daviau to Billy Eustace to enter a complaint.

"Dat leetle fellaire don' know how for file saw," he declared. "Ba Joe! Eet ban jus' lak' cuttin' down tree wit' r-rat-tail file."

"When did you first notice that the saws weren't cutting good?" demanded Eustace, calmly.

"Yes'day morning, when dat leetle fellaire was file dem."

"Hadn't noticed anything wrong before — had you?"

"No."

Eustace slowly looked the short Frenchman over from head to foot with a cynical and commiserating glance that made him feel decidedly uncomfortable.

"Pierre," announced the camp boss, solemnly. "You're a great, big bluff. Didn't you know that Carver's been filing them saws for the past two or three weeks?"



"N-No," admitted Pierre.

"Didn't you know — hadn't you heard — that he is the crack saw-filer in the State? Get a move on you. Quit your jokin'. Don't try that thin dodge to explain why Bonnefont's crew's gettin' ahead of you."

"Ba gosh! M'sieu Eustace, we beat Bonnefont more as tree quarter de tam," protested Pierre.

"I don't know about that," said Eustace, doubtfully. "They think they've got you winded."

"Monjee! We mak' dem jomp for see us 't all," declared Pierre, with some warmth.

"We'll see! We'll see!" was Billy's non-committal answer. "Now get into the game. Drop your bluffing and fell trees."

"Ba cripe! You ban mak' me for be wan beeg fool," reported Pierre to his coadjutors. "Dat leetle fellaire ban wan grande man for file saw. He ban work een beeg saw-factory before he was come here."

This glowing, if not strictly accurate, report was enough to establish Norman's standing as a saw filer, and thereafter no complaints attended his efforts in that direction.

Fred Warner had devoted every spare minute to the improvement of his handwriting, and Norman was both surprised and gratified at the rapid progress he had made.

As the winter advanced the yarding operations came gradually to an end. More teams were added and the jangle of bells could be heard at frequent intervals



during the day as the big caravan of wagon-sleds, coming from the yard and piled high with spruce logs, drew up in front of the landing to add their contributions to its rapidly growing bulk.

Rivalry between the different teams was keen, particularly those owned by the company, whose special duty it was to act as pace-makers for the others.

“Jus’ you look on top dat load! Ba Joe! dat fellow don’ haul wood enough for cook hees tea.” “I t’ink you ban afraid for break you sled.” “Jus’ put you horses on top you load, ba gosh, I tow you een.”

With these and similar railleries the company’s teamsters urged the men who drove their own horses to haul as many logs as they did.

The great water-cart toiled laboriously over the route several times a day until the road presented a surface as hard and smooth as a house floor. Moreover, men were stationed at intervals along the way to fill in promptly any little depression that might occur, and thereby keep conditions as favorable as possible for the hauling of heavy loads. Some of the men were permitted to go after hauling commenced, as, with the close of yarding operations, their services were no longer needed.

But while the crew was smaller, life at the camp became more animated as the teamsters, the landing tenders, and part of the swampers employed on the road now took their dinners there.

The oat house was kept constantly full, and as Nor-



man looked upon it with its overhanging front, made by extending the roof some feet beyond the end, and its interior heaped high with the straw-colored grain, he sometimes wondered at the astounding capacity possessed by the woods horses for the stowing away of provender.

Norman had made a number of Sunday trips through the big woods with Fred Warner, and had become so familiar with the general topography of the country, and so expert in the use of compass and snow-shoes, that he occasionally ventured out alone. He had also made a number of very creditable little barrels, which he had filled with choice spruce gum of his own picking, in readiness for his return home.

It was well into the middle of February when Felix Lamarre made the astonishing discovery that someone had been raiding his provisions, which were stored in the dingle. A careful watch was at once set for the thief; but without success. Indeed he seemed to become bolder, as the men became more excited over his depredations, and eager to effect his capture. Articles began to disappear from the men's camp in a most unaccountable manner—the climax being reached one day when it was found that the treasured banjo owned by the men, and which Norman had frequently played for them of an evening, had mysteriously disappeared.

The following morning, when Vede Pelotte went out to feed his horses, he found it necessary to shovel



some of the oats from the rear part of the oat house, and in so doing unearthed the missing instrument. The discovery was an important one for it showed where the thief had stored his plunder. Billy Eustace immediately set one of the swampers to work shoveling over the oat pile with the result that a number of pounds of pork; three hams; two sides of bacon; half a dozen cans of condensed milk, and a quantity of tea, coffee and sugar, which had evidently been stolen from the camp stores, and several articles of clothing which had been taken from the men, were brought to light.

"I deserve to be kicked to death by grasshoppers for not thinking of that place before," declared Eustace that evening by the stove in the beaver house. "It's about the only place around the camp where a man could put anything and be real sure it was out of sight."

"An' not any too safe there," said Jim Benner, "considerin' the way our oat piles air vanishing."

"Safer than you think," asserted Ike Tapley. "It's evident that the oat pile hes be'n only a short-time hiding place for the cuss es is doin' the stealin'. These things we found to-day were his latest pickin's; th' very last run o' shad. He hadn't found a chance to take 'em to his preserve — wherever that may be."

"You're right, Ike," declared Eustace. "Fred," he added, "I wish you'd go over to the men's camp and ask Sol Soc to come in here."

"Sol," he asked, a little later when the Indian had



put in an appearance. "When you've been cruising the woods of a Sunday have you run on to any gummers or trappers camping within easy distance of this camp?"

"Two men trap Beaver Tail stream."

"Well, that's fifteen miles from here and no road. I don't believe they've been sacking stuff from here on snow-shoes."

"No. Good men. Buyum own stuff," said Sol.

"You don't think they could possibly have drifted over here, and lifted the stuff we've lost?"

"No. T'ief in camp. Mebbe me catchum bimeby."

"I guess you're right, Sol. We've got the skunk in our own nest somewhere; but when we shake 'im out there'll be a killing."

While this conversation was going on, Norman, seated by the camp desk, had improved the opportunity to read anew a letter which Vede Pelotte had brought him the night before from his father. One passage particularly interested him.

"Simon Paddock called at my office, yesterday," wrote the General, "and was anxious to get your address. He said he regretted very much the part he had played in the Horton house affair, and wanted to write and tell you how sorry he was. I am informed that the boys he formerly associated with have ostracised him, and I fancy he has paid dearly for his treachery in the uncomfortable life he has led since. Boys are too apt to be uncharitable. It is better to forgive and forget. I shouldn't wonder if you received a



letter from Simon asking your pardon for the trouble he has made you. If so, I trust you will be broad enough to deal generously with him."

"The sneak!" reflected Norman, bitterly. "Father doesn't know him. He thinks he is penitent, and has given him my address! I'm sure he didn't want it for any good purpose."

The truth of this judgment was fully established the next evening, when Billy Eustace had a fire built in the scalers' house, which was temporarily vacant, and called Norman in there for a very serious conference.

It was evident that the camp boss was not a little disturbed in his mind.

"Carver," he said, abruptly, handing Norman a Boston newspaper, "is that marked article true?"

Norman's heart sank within him. He recognized the article bordered in blue lead-pencil as a rather lurid and somewhat sensational account of the Horton house affair, which had been printed in a well-known publication of the "yellow" variety.

He read it slowly and carefully, although it was already familiar to him, and every word of it seemed to burn itself into his mind in letters of fire.

"It's substantially correct in what it states, and wholly wrong in what it infers," he said, handing it back to Eustace, when he had finished.

"So you broke into a man's house — and are here in hiding, are you?" demanded Eustace, in a tone of incredulity.



"Yes and no," returned Norman. "Some of the boys in my school who were out on a lark one night were foolish enough to swipe —"

"We call it steal up this way," interposed Eustace, sternly.

"A suit of ancient armor which was in a man's house, and dress up the statue of the school founder in it," continued Norman, ignoring the interruption. "I was one of them. It was a silly performance and kicked up quite a row. One of the fellows who was with us gave us away. We were brought into the police court; but the judge let us go with a reprimand."

Eustace looked at him with a troubled face.

"I was brought up in an old-fashioned way," he said, slowly. "I never had much time to play. The members of my family had to scratch too hard to get something to eat to find time for any 'larks' as you call them. If a man had broken into another man's house and taken his property in my neighborhood, we should have called him a thief."

Norman turned and faced him with burning cheeks.

"Surely, Mr. Eustace," he said, incredulously, "you can't — you don't think —"

"I don't know what to think," interrupted Eustace. "You confess that you broke into and entered a man's house; that one of your confederates turned State's evidence; but that in some way you got clear of the charge. Now, before you came here, stealing was



practically unknown in this camp; but you had only been here a short time before things began to disappear. You were one of the few persons connected with the crew that had any opportunity to commit thefts, for your duties kept you about the camp while the men were away in the woods."

"But I was the first, and have been the heaviest loser, by them," protested Norman, who was fairly dazed by the suspicions entertained by Eustace. "Do you know what it means to insinuate a thing like that?" he cried, hotly. "Do you think I will submit to be unjustly accused and vilified?"

"I haven't accused you," returned Eustace, coldly. "I have just stated some mighty strange coincidences, to see if you could tell me any connection between them."

"Well, I can't," declared Norman, with emphasis, "and what's more, the Lakeland Lumber Company has just as much reason to suspect you of this crime as it has me."

"I think not," returned Eustace. "I never broke into a man's house, and I never was in court to answer to a charge of theft."

"Have you the wrapper in which the paper came?" demanded Norman.

"Yes," said Eustace, taking it from his pocket. "I thought it might be well to hang on to it a spell."

It was a sheet of ordinary manila addressed to "The Foreman of Camp 4, Care Lakeland Lumber



Co., Gamewood, Maine." Norman could not restrain an exclamation of anger and disgust as he recognized the scrawly handwriting of Simon Paddock.

"Know where it comes from?" asked Eustace.

"Yes — from the cur who was foremost in planning the lark I told you of, and then gave us all away to save himself. He went to father the other day and pretended that he was very sorry and wanted to write me an apology. Father gave him my address, and this is what has come of it."

"He's certainly a yellow pup, all right," declared Eustace, "but that doesn't change the situation."

"Mr. Eustace," said Norman, in a voice that trembled with emotion, "if you are determined to think me a thief, I don't suppose I can prevent it; but I give you fair warning that I will hold you responsible if you attempt to put that brand upon me with the crew. The very suggestion is as false as it is preposterous and insulting. The publication of such an unreasonable and unwarranted suspicion would be a criminal libel."

"I'd give a hundred dollars this minute, Carver, poor as I am, to feel sure that what you say is true," returned Eustace, with deep feeling.

He paused and walked up and down the small camp with quick, nervous strides. It was evident that he was in deep distress of mind.

"I don't want to suspect any man unfairly," he said, presently, pausing in front of Norman, "least of all,



you; but these are the facts. They don't look right. Understand, though, I haven't made any charges and I don't intend to. I'm going to wait developments a spell. It's an old saying that murder will out. If you're innocent in this matter, as I hope you are, I reckon you won't have any trouble in proving it before log-driving time. If you do I shall be the happiest man in Camp 4."

"Use your own judgment a little, Mr. Eustace," urged Norman, in a softer tone. "What possible use would I have for any of the truck that's been stolen?"

"I don't know," admitted Eustace. "I can't see what use it would be to any of the crew. Looks as if someone was stealing for the pure cussedness of it."

"Do you think I would voluntarily deprive myself of my shotgun, lantern, and my compass?"

"It wouldn't seem so," conceded Eustace, "unless, of course, you wanted to divert suspicion."

"Who first discovered these thefts?"

"You did."

"And reported them immediately — didn't I?"

"Yes."

"Here is fifty dollars my father gave me when I left home. He called it my emergency fund," said Norman, pulling a roll of bills from his pocket. "I haven't spent a cent of it. I haven't even spent the loose change I had in my pocket when I started from home. What possible need have I had of the things that were lost at this camp?"



"I can't conceive," declared Eustace, gloomily. "I think we better drop the matter. Come," he added, turning towards the door, "let's go back to the beaver house."



## CHAPTER XX

### CLOUTER KELTY HAS AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE

It has always puzzled lumbermen and others to account in full for the wireless telegraphy of the woods. In a large measure the events of civilization become a sealed book in the heart of the wilderness. Reports of wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, strikes, and death-dealing disasters travel very slowly, and arouse very little interest in the deep recesses of the forest. With the events of the forest itself, however, it is very different. The news of them seems to defy the barriers of time and space. It travels the vast solitudes with incredible speed, possessing, apparently, the power and reach of mental telepathy.

Let a big moose be killed, a poacher be caught by the game wardens, or the life of a logger be crushed out by a falling tree, and in an amazingly short time the news of the occurrence is known in the remotest corners of the wilderness, and becomes the topic of conversation around every camp-fire within a hundred mile radius.

Something of this subtle power of woods communication was revealed to Norman the morning following his interview in the scalers' camp with Billy Eustace.



He was conscious, as he came into the cook's camp to breakfast, of a decided change in the previously friendly attitude of the crew. Before they had been accustomed to greet him with cordial nods. Now he looked upon scowling and averted faces. He was sensible, too, of an atmosphere of restraint that was vastly more chilling than the cold winds that came roaring across the lake surface to whistle through the woods and bend the tall tree-tops outside the camp.

There were, it is true, one or two exceptions to the rule of treatment accorded him by the members of the crew. Sol Soc actually smiled upon him in the heartiness of his nod, and big Pete Bedotte shook him by the hands with ostentatious and effusive warmth. Fred Warner and Jud Skinner also greeted him with their customary cordial smiles. Norman felt instinctively that whatever might come up these friends at least would be loyal to him.

Eustace, gloomy and preoccupied, sat at the head of the table. The camp boss was no actor, and Norman, keenly sensitive, was conscious that the nod he received from him was lacking in its usual warmth. He was convinced that Billy, in spite of the tacit understanding between them, had been guilty of communicating his suspicion to the crew, and a feeling of bitterness filled his heart at the injustice of such treatment.

Few words were spoken during the meal. At its close the men left the camp with scarcely a glance in the direction of Norman — a coldly contemptuous



treatment that cut the proud spirit of the boy to the very quick.

As he was passing out of the dingle one of the swampers brushed roughly by him. The man had lost several articles of clothing, and Norman was not surprised to hear him growl "thief!" in tones distinctly audible to the men about them.

To Norman this open naming of the suspicion that had shown in the faces of the men was almost a relief; but to the man it was an unfortunate break. With a bound Sol Soc grasped him about the waist and, swinging him over his shoulder, hurled him head-first upon the big snowdrift that banked the camp, and in which he sank almost from sight.

For a moment the Indian stood glowering upon the men about him, his eyes blazing a challenge which none of them cared to accept. One by one they filed past him in sullen silence and made their way to the horse hovels, where presently the man who had been thrown into the snow-bank, having extricated himself from his cold bath, followed wrathfully after them.

When he had passed from sight, the Indian turned to Norman with a softened expression in his eyes.

"Keepum up brave," he said, briefly. "You good boy. Come 'lon all fine," and having thus delivered himself, he stalked away to the landing, where he was serving as an assistant to Jim Benner.

Norman, his face flushed from the indignities he had suffered, and his heart bitter with the feeling that



he had been unfairly treated, was about to go to the beaver house when he felt a restraining touch upon his shoulder. He turned to meet the outstretched hand of Fred Warner, which closed upon his in a warm clasp.

"It's indecent, the way the men used you this morning," declared the cookee, indignantly, "but don't forget, old man, that you have some warm friends here yet, and what's more we mean to see you through."

Norman choked a little.

"Thank you, Fred," he said, after a pause, controlling his voice with an effort. "A friend in need is a friend indeed. Oh, it is mean, it is despicable to come at me in the way they have without rhyme or reason," he continued, vehemently. "I should never have thought it possible. Ah! they would like to drive me away from camp under this cloud; but I won't go, Fred. I'm going to stay with them till I make them see and acknowledge the asinine mistake they've made. I never looked for such usage from Billy Eustace."

Fred Warner looked at him in surprise.

"Why, what has Billy done?" he asked.

"Reported me to the crew as a — a thief," replied Norman, bitterly.

"I think you're mistaken there," declared Fred. "I don't think he's mentioned the matter to anyone. I was in the men's camp while you and he were having your interview, and no one spoke of having heard anything of the kind from him. Besides, I know that he



did not leave the beaver house after I returned to it, and you've just seen him hurry away into the woods ahead of the men, without saying a word to any of them. Looks to me as if he wasn't in a talking mood."

"How did the men learn that he suspected me of being the camp thief, if he didn't tell them?" demanded Norman, in a tone of incredulity.

"In several ways," responded Fred. "In the first place, after that banjo was taken, the idea was suggested among them that, inasmuch as you were the only man in camp who could play it, you would be the only one who could have any reason for — for —"

"Stealing it," completed Norman, as Fred hesitated. Fred nodded.

"Of course," he continued, "they all knew that Billy Eustace was holding a private confab with you in the scalers' camp — and then on top of the rest came Baptiste Groder's dream."

"Oh! So Baptiste had a dream, did he?"

"So he says — a dream in which he distinctly saw you climb into the upper bunk, take down the bag containing the banjo in broad daylight, and make off with it."

"But surely the men wouldn't take any stock in dreams!" exclaimed Norman, in amazement.

"You don't know them yet," said Fred. "Loggers are funny fellows. They believe in lots of things that would seem terribly silly to you and me; but which



are very real to them. They are the most superstitious fellows you ever saw. Ghosts, witches, haunts, goblins, and a hundred different omens of good or ill luck, are all very real to them. They are not afraid of anything living, but anything that seems to partake of the supernatural fills them with terror. The fellow who was cookee for a spell before I came here nearly frightened Felix into fits."

"How was that?"

"He took a dead rabbit one of the men had snared, tied it onto the end of a broom, and then made a skirt of a blanket, wrapping it about the broom so that the rabbit's head just barely protruded above it. They said bunny's eyes were wide open, and I imagine the outfit was terribly gruesome. He leaned it up against the inside of the door to the cook's camp, and when Felix opened it, on his return from a trip to the bean hole, the whole thing tumbled out on him. He nearly went crazy; hollered like a loon; raced through the woods to where one of the crews was yarding with his hair on end, and made the cold chills creep up and down the boys' backbones by swearing that he'd positively had a visit from the devil. He was pretty mad when some of the men went back with him and showed up the joke. The cookee got his walking papers, forthwith; but it was more than a fortnight before Felix dared to sleep alone again."

"So you think that alleged dream of Baptiste's carried weight, do you?" demanded Norman.



"I know it did," declared Fred. "They regarded it as an omen."

Norman shook his head, incredulously.

"It doesn't seem possible," he said. "Moreover, I don't believe he had any such dream. The idea that I would have a special motive in stealing the banjo, and this so-called dream, were, I believe, suggestions emanating from the same source."

"You think some one is putting it up on you?"

"I know that one enemy of mine was responsible for Billy's suspicions," returned Norman, "and I feel that another has been stirring up the crew, although I venture to say he's been mighty sly about it."

Fred plainly showed his skepticism.

"Do you think they are in collusion?" he asked.

"No, but if they had been they couldn't have acted more in concert," replied Norman. "One of them lives in Boston, and he poisoned Billy Eustace, so far as I am concerned, by sending him a paper containing an account of a very foolish school scrape in which I was concerned. The other is a member of this crew."

"And I think I can guess who he is," declared Fred.

"I think likely you can," admitted Norman, "but, if so, I wish you would keep your suspicions to yourself for the present. Meanwhile, I want you to know that I am very grateful to you for the friendship you have shown me."

"Don't mention it," said Fred, deprecatingly. "I should feel badly if I supposed you thought me foolish



enough to harbor such a senseless suspicion against you."

"I suppose the men talked it all over among themselves, last night, didn't they?"

"Yes. It was reported that you and Billy were having a hot time in the scalers' camp; then Pierre Daviau voiced their suspicions about the banjo — after which Baptiste sprung his dream. That seemed to the men to be a clincher. They began to be quite outspoken when Sol Soc broke loose and shook up the dry bones a bit. I never saw Sol exhibit such a gift of gab before. He declared that you were a good boy, and ended with threatening to provide the material for a funeral with anyone who said you were not. Pete Bedotte endorsed what Sol said, and declared he'd help him polish off any man who dared speak a word against you. Jud Skinner wasn't quite so warlike; but he asserted very emphatically that you were all right, as straight as a string, and expressed the opinion that any man who would be guilty of thinking otherwise must have rats in his garret. The combination in your favor was strong enough to put a stop on hostile conversation; but it was evident that, while the men didn't indulge in much talk, they were doing considerable thinking. I'm inclined to think the men will be rather chary of offering you any affront after what's happened. Big Pete and Sol Soc are a combination they won't want to bump up against."

Norman was conscious of a feeling of relief as he



returned to the beaver house. It was a satisfaction to know that Fred Warner, for whom he had come to feel a warm friendship, was not one to misjudge him. At the same time all the aggressiveness of his nature came to the front, and he determined to stay with the situation, disagreeable as it was, until he should be able to show the members of the crew how unfounded had been the suspicions they harbored against him.

Arriving at the beaver house, Norman took the water pail from the shelf and started for the lake. As he passed the long, low horse hovels he paused abruptly, impressed with the force of a new thought.

In going to the yards in the morning the camp teams did not pass the landing; but made their way into the main logging-road by a short cut. It was this brief stretch of wood-road, used in going from and coming to the camp from the yarding places that had attracted Norman's attention.

Putting down his pail he ran quickly along this way until he reached the iced and well-worn thoroughfare along which the wagon-sleds, piled high with spruce logs, were hauled to the landing. As he reached it a team of powerful dapple greys came into view from behind a screen of cedars, driven by Clouter Kelty, who, as he perceived Norman, brought his horses to an abrupt stop.

"Hello, Carver," he said, with an evident attempt to be friendly.

"Hello," responded Norman, shortly.



"Ah, my little bantam," continued Kelty, in a tone that was evidently meant to be conciliatory, "I'm well aware of the fact that you don't waste any of your affections on me. All the same I'm sorry you're down in your luck. It isn't very complimentary to the heads of these fellows that they should lay these thefts to you. If they had the brains of a louse they'd know better."

"Thanks!" said Norman, dryly.

"I'm your friend," declared Kelty, shooting him a furtive glance under his shaggy brows, "and what's more I'm going to stand by you; bet your life I am."

"You're very kind," returned Norman, "but how do you happen to be making your first trip to the yards along the lake shore road from the landing? Why didn't you take this short cut from the hovels?"

"Bound to be suspicious, I see," returned Kelty, testily. "If it will ease your feelings any, though, I don't mind telling you that I first drove down the tote-road to the lake to water my horses at the water hole. Having done that, it was nearer for me to swing into this main road at the landing than it was to come back to the camp, and take the cut from the hovels. See?"

"Yes," admitted Norman.

"Now let me give you some advice," pursued Kelty. "Don't let these fellows impose on you. If I was in your place I'd just give 'em all the go-by. I'd go home, and let 'em sweat. Don't you think that's the way for you to let 'em down?"



"I haven't perfected any plans," responded Norman, warily. "I want to think the matter over first."

"I wouldn't hang round here a minute to be kicked by that bunch of grasshoppers, if I were in your place," declared Kelty, with emphasis. "I guess it would bother Bill Eustace to get another clerk and filer at this stage of the game, and it would serve him just right if you should pack your grip, and give him the merry ha, ha."

"I'll think about it," was Norman's non-committal rejoinder.

"I wouldn't hesitate a minute if I were you," persisted Kelty. "You've got the whip-row in this matter, if you've only got nerve enough to make the most of it," and with this parting declaration, he started up his horses, and was soon lost from sight round a curve in the road.

"The infamous scoundrel!" thought Norman, wrathfully, as he stood looking after him. "He wants to be rid of me, and thinks I'm not bright enough to see through it. Run away, and practically confess myself a thief! The idea! No — no, Mr. Clouter Kelty, you can't get rid of me so easily."

Stepping into the main road, Norman went a few steps in the direction from which Kelty and his team had put in an appearance. Pausing he surveyed this piece of road with critical care. A short distance away he could hear the voices of Jim Benner and Sol Soc at work upon the landing; but a fringe of spruce and



✓ fir-trees, which grew upon the side of the road next to the lake shore, effectually hid them from view. A number of cedars and scrubby hemlocks grew upon the opposite side of the road, and formed a screen for the camps, save where the short cut from the hovels intersected it. Standing at this point of juncture Norman looked back upon the scraggly collection of log huts and hovels — built of unpeeled logs of irregular length — which together constituted “the camp.” First came the oat house piled high with its straw-colored burden; beyond this the horse hovels; then the beaver house and scalers’ camp; and opposite them, the long, low camps, with intervening dingle, which constituted the sleeping quarters of the men, and the domain wherein the cook, Felix Lamarre, held undisputed sway.

“The rascal!” muttered Norman. “I see it all now. His team has always tailed the procession. He’d stop his horses back here where they’d be out of sight of both the landing and the camp. Then he’d sneak ahead and watch. If he caught me going for water, or saw that the coast was otherwise clear, he’d streak down that short-cut road from the hovels, gather in what plunder he could or any that he might have hidden over night in the oat pile, and be back and away without anyone seeing or suspecting him. I think I’ll watch him just a little closer hereafter.”

That night Norman laid out a plan of operation with Fred Warner. The following morning, after the



teamsters had gone, Kelty as usual bringing up the rear, and going round by way of the water hole and the landing, Norman with a pail on his arm walked leisurely down the tote-road towards the lake. No sooner was he out of sight of the camps than Clouter Kelty put in an appearance round the fringe of cedars that screened the camps from the main road, and came quickly down the short-cut road to the hovels. Pausing in front of the oat house, he cast a cautious glance about the clearing, and then gave vent to a gleeful chuckle.

"Blast my eyes!" he soliloquized, complacently, "but this 'ere hiding-place is better than it was before. No one even thinks of looking here now. It doesn't even occur to these 'ere mutton heads that anyone would dream of hiding anything here now that it's been exposed."

He expanded his broad mouth into a grin that was at once spacious and self-satisfied.

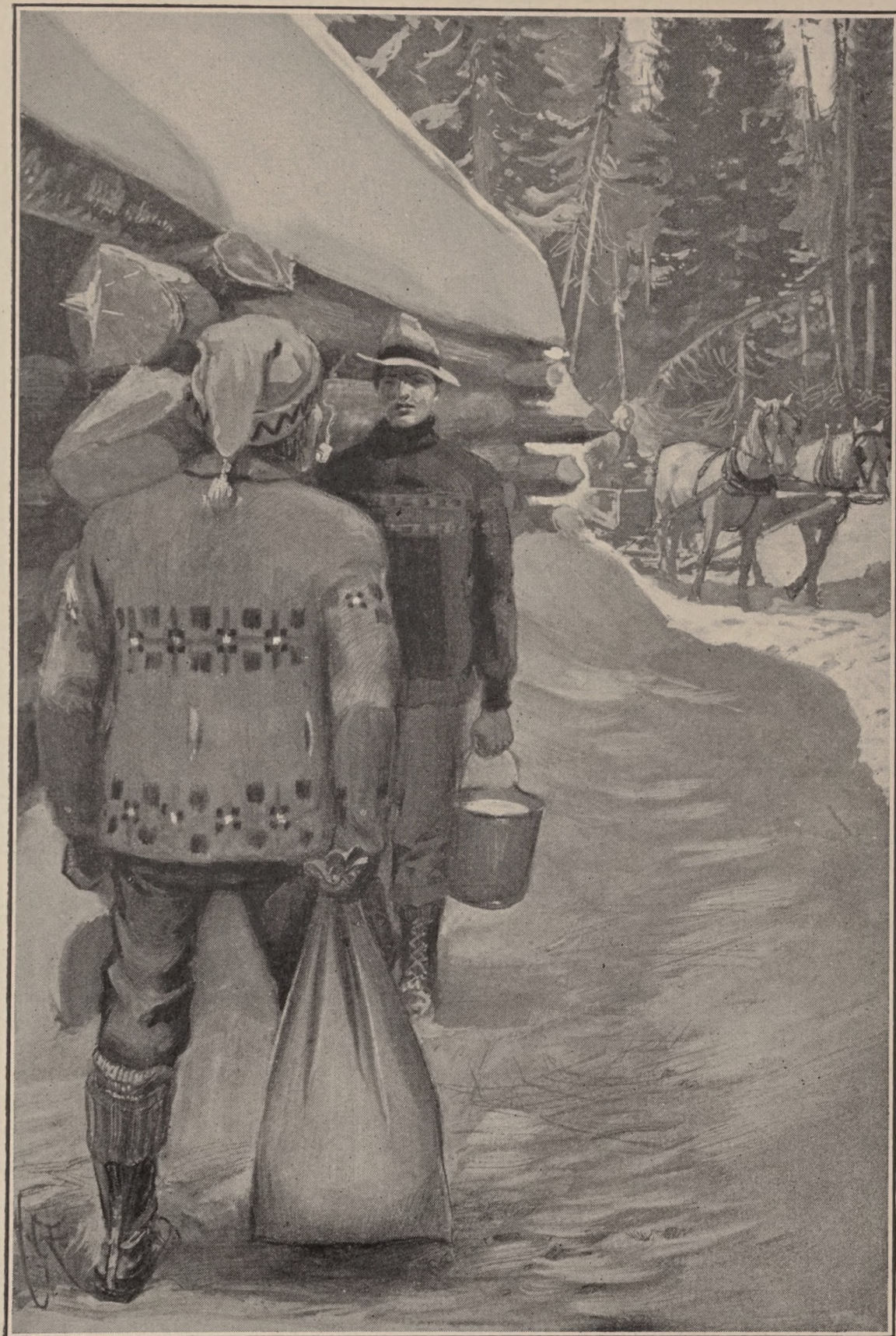
"My soul!" he ejaculated under his breath. "What rich, ripe fruit these mossbacks are!"

He seized a big scoop shovel from the oat pile, and with a few rapid swings, laid back the slippery grain from a rear corner of the big, covered bin. Then reaching down into the hole he had made he pulled out a grain bag about one-fourth filled, and carefully tied up with a piece of tarred rope. He sat this burden down for a moment in front of the oat house, and then with a few sweeps of his shovel sent the oats



sliding back into the corner, filling up the hole he had made. Tucking the bag under his arm he was about to return to his team when Fred Warner stepped from behind the oat house and confronted him. At almost the same moment there came the sound of bells, a big team of dapple greys swung round the line that concealed the main road from view, and came leisurely down the short cut to the hovels with Norman Carver driving them.





FRED WARNER STEPPED FROM BEHIND THE OAT-HOUSE AND  
CONFRONTED HIM. — *Page 274.*







## CHAPTER XXI

### A MURDEROUS ASSAULT ON JIM BENNER

For a moment a wolfish glare gleamed from Kelty's small, round eyes. He looked at Fred Warner like a wild animal at bay. Almost immediately, however, the look gave way to one of craft, as the nerve and daring of the man reasserted themselves.

"Hello," he said, coolly. "What you trying to do, play ghost on me?"

"No," responded Fred, somewhat abashed by Kelty's unexpected nonchalance, "I was wondering what brought you to the oat house at this time o' day."

"The company's business," declared Kelty, calmly. "I was going to the upper landing, and as I don't expect to be back here at noon I thought I'd carry along a feed of oats for my horses. Have you any objections?"

"Why, no," said Fred, feeling decidedly disconcerted and uncomfortable. "Seems to me, though, you are taking along a mighty light feed."

"All I want 'em to have when they're at work," rejoined Kelty. "Most of these fellows here over-feed their horses. What in thunder do you think you're doing with that team?" he shouted angrily to



Norman, who had brought the big greys to a standstill at the end of the hovel.

"I found them on the road without a driver, and thought I'd better bring them into camp."

"Well, don't you ever let me know of your drawing a rein over them again," snapped Kelty. "I'm driving those horses, and I'm entirely capable of taking care of them without any of your assistance. See?"

"I heard you," returned Norman, quietly.

"Well, you'll mind what I say if you want to keep a whole head on your shoulders," blustered Kelty, his face white with passion. "It's mighty funny if I can't leave my horses two or three minutes to get a feed of oats for them without your butting in."

He spread the bag out on the cross bunk, coolly seated himself upon it, and swinging the team around started back towards the main road.

"Say," he shouted back over his shoulder, "I've known boys of your size to pick up considerable money by 'tending strictly to their own business."

When he was out of sight, the boys stood staring at one another, still dazed by the cool audacity of the man.

"How's that for lion-hearted nerve?" gasped Norman, presently, breaking the silence.

"Never saw anything like it before," declared Fred. "One thing is sure, though, whatever he had in that bag was packed in oats."

"Oh, he's shrewd enough to take that precaution,"



conceded Norman. "You see, now, Fred, just how he's been working it."

"Oh, that's evident enough," agreed Warner, "but it isn't going to be an easy matter for you and me to prove it on him. He'll be mighty wary after this."

"I've an idea he won't linger with us much longer. Looks to me as if he'd been laying in supplies for a long trip."

"I was thinking of that," agreed Fred. "It wouldn't surprise me if he lit out for Canada 'most any day. He could easily carry a week's supplies on his back, and eke them out by raiding the deer yards. This whole country is full of them."

"I don't think we'd better say anything about what we've seen to-day," said Norman, after a moment's reflection. "Meanwhile we'll keep our eyes open, and see what we can find out."

"I think that's a good plan," acquiesced Fred, and a moment later the boys separated, Fred to take up his duties in the cook's camp, and Norman to file the saws awaiting him in the beaver house.

"How did you happen to send Pat Farrow to the upper landing to-day?" asked Jim Benner of Billy Eustace, as they sat by the stove that evening.

"I didn't," returned Eustace. "I found him up there and he said he understood some of the boys to say that I wanted him there. I told him it was a mistake; but as long as he was there he might as well stay, and finish out the day."



"If I had my way he'd be tramping down the tote-road," growled Benner.

"He's a good teamster, Jim," returned Eustace, wearily, "and good men, you know, are scarce."

Norman was much gratified to find that Mr. Collins had arrived during the night accompanied by Aaron Slowman, the land owner's scaler, who as usual maintained the reputation he enjoyed in the camp of being a recluse — the last man to retire at night, and the last to turn out in the morning.

Mr. Collins greeted Norman very cordially when they met at breakfast, although he could not help seeing the hostile attitude which the men maintained towards his protege.

When the crew had gone, he lingered behind, and followed Norman into the beaver house.

"I've heard all about it. Vede told me," he said, quietly, as Norman lifted a haggard face and looked him in the eye.

"And you —" began Norman.

"Don't believe a word of it," interrupted the scaler. "It's preposterous. I told Billy Eustace so this morning, and I fancy he isn't feeling half as sure of himself as he was before."

"But he isn't so much to blame after all," said Norman. "I got into a bad scrape at home, and there was a mean fellow there who sent Billy a paper containing an account of it. As a result he doesn't hold a very high opinion of me, I fear."



"I knew all about that affair," returned Mr. Collins. "Your father wrote me the full particulars before you came here."

"And you still believe in me?" questioned Norman, eagerly.

"Certainly I do," returned the scaler, with emphasis. "I know that the company hasn't a more honorable fellow in its employ. What's more, I intend everyone else shall know it before we are through with this matter."

"Thank you," said Norman, gratefully.

"Now go quietly about your work," continued the scaler, "and above all don't worry. Rest assured that this matter will come out all right in the end. I shall certainly see you through with it."

When the scaler had gone to his work on the landing he left Norman in a much more cheerful frame of mind. It was evident that his father's old friend had full faith in him, and he was confident that his assurance that all would come out right was one not idly given.

That night as they sat about the stove in the beaver house, there came a hoarse shout at the door. Norman made haste to push it open, when Harry McMurray staggered in with the limp form of Jim Benner in his arms. By the dim light of the kerosene lamps it was seen that the old man's face was streaked with blood.

"Spread a blanket on one of the lower bunks?"



ordered McMurray, as the men gathered about him with exclamations of horror. "There's been bad business here," he added. "Looks like murder."

Eustace hastened to comply with his request, and Benner, moaning feebly, was laid upon the bunk.

"How did it all happen?" demanded Mr. Collins, voicing the question that was on every tongue.

"That's just what I intend to find out," returned McMurray, briskly. "Go into the cook's camp, Fred, and get me some clean towels, and a basin of hot water. I was coming along the tote-road a few minutes ago," he continued, when Warner had hurried away on his errand, "and just as I got opposite the landing I thought I heard someone groan. I hurried over there and found Jim stretched out on the logs with his face all covered with blood. Looks to me as if some one had laid him out with a peavey. Seems like a pretty bad clip."

At this moment Fred Warner came back into the beaver house with a wash-basin full of hot water and several towels.

McMurray produced a roll of iodoform gauze from one of his pockets, and, with Mr. Collins standing beside him with a lamp, bent over the sufferer, who was gasping and moaning incoherently.

Through the doorway streamed the members of the crew, who gazed silently and with white, set faces upon the ghastly, blood-stained countenance of the victim.

"Looks mighty bad," said McMurray, presently, as



he washed away the blood that oozed from a ragged-looking cut above Benner's forehead. "I'm afraid his skull is broken."

A low, angry murmur came from the crew at this announcement.

Picking up his gauze roll, the walking boss proceeded to swathe Benner's head in the numerous layers of a rough bandage. "There," he announced, rising to his feet, "that's the best I can do now. Who was working with this man on the landing?"

"Me," said Sol Soc, stepping forward from the group of men in which he stood.

"When did you leave him?"

"Me leaveum come supper," explained the Indian. "He say he markum one two more log, den he come."

"Did you hear any outcry?"

"No."

"Where's your peavey?"

"In dingle."

"You brought it back with you?"

"Eet ban stan' on door," corroborated Baptiste Groder. "I ban saw heem put eet dere."

"Go and get it," commanded McMurray.

Baptiste hurried away, and a moment later reappeared with the peavey. McMurray examined it critically by the light of the lamp which Mr. Collins held for him to assist his inspection.

"This isn't the one that did the business," he announced, in a tone of relief.



"You no thinkum me hurt ole Jim?" questioned the Indian, in a grieved tone. "We big frien's."

"So I thought," assented McMurray, "but I'm going to sift this matter to the bottom whether any of you feel hurt or not."

"Hol' on! Ba cripe, you stay rat w'ere you ban," shouted big Pete Bedotte, interposing his bulky form in the doorway as Farrow attempted to brush past him. "I t'ink you ban las' fellaire w'at unload on top dat landin'."

"Is that so?" demanded McMurray, turning his keen glance upon the driver of the dapple greys.

"Sure," admitted Farrow. "I usually close up the procession. The Indian was there when Benner and I spilled the load."

"Dat so," admitted Sol. "I was workum on foot of landing."

"Could you hear what passed between Farrow and Benner?" demanded McMurray.

"No. Me been rollum log," replied the Indian.

"Didn't have any words, any row, did they?" pursued the walking boss.

"Don't know. Can't tell."

"If they did you didn't notice it?"

"No."

"Pierre, you and Baptiste take lanterns and go down on the landing. Get any peaveys that are there, and bring them to me. The rest of you remain here."

Standing closely packed in the hot little room, the



men discussed in subdued tones the startling event which had occurred in their midst, while Baptiste and Pierre hurried away on their errand.

"Someone must go to Aerie Lake," announced McMurray, "someone who knows the way and isn't afraid of a twenty-five mile jaunt through the woods in the night."

"Me go," announced Sol Soc, promptly.

"He's the only man in the bunch who is equal to it — except yourself," declared Mr. Collins.

"And you," added McMurray.

"I might; but I shouldn't want to try it at my age if it could be avoided," said the scaler.

"But you know Sol was —" began McMurray.

"Yes — I know —" interposed the scaler, impatiently; "but I think you're as well satisfied as I am that he has told the truth."

"Enough to take the chances," declared McMurray. "Get your snow-shoes and a lunch, and strike out, Sol. Rout out Doctor Pardee, and tell him to take his best team and get here just as quick as he can."

"All right. Me go," returned the Indian, promptly, as he glided out of the camp.

A moment later Pierre and Baptiste returned with two peaveys, one of which was promptly identified as Benner's. McMurray examined it closely, and laid it aside. Then he took the other and started to give it a similar scrutiny. Almost at the first glance, however, he gave a hasty ejaculation.



"This is the one that did the business," he announced, as the men gathered about him. "See those marks?" he added, pointing to some dark stains on the lower part of the stock and extending onto the steel socket. "Do any of you recognize this peavey?"

"Bat you life!" exclaimed Pete Bedotte, excitedly. "See dem two black knots jus' below nub? Dat ban Pat Farrow's peavey."

"You're a liar," cried Kelty, livid with rage.

"Dry up!" commanded McMurray, sharply. "We'll see about this."

"Do any of the rest of you recognize this peavey?" he asked, as the men crowded closer about him.

"Yes," said Peters, quietly. "It's Farrow's. He drives behind me, and I've seen him using it dozens of times." Several others of the men also identified the peavey as Farrow's.

"This is a mean, dirty plot — a put-up job to throw me down," stormed Kelty, in a desperate attempt to counteract the force of this damaging testimony.

"Perhaps," said McMurray, briefly. "All the same you may consider yourself under arrest."

"This is an outrage — a criminal outrage!" blustered Kelty. "What right or warrant have you to put me under restraint, I'd like to know."

"This, you skunk!" roared McMurray, in a voice of thunder, stepping forward and shaking a big fist under Kelty's nose. "Now, blast you, close up that face of yours, and don't you let me hear another



word out of you. Pete," he added, turning to the big Frenchman, "take him over to the men's camp and look out for him to-night. I'm going to take him to Bolton in the morning."

"Ba gosh! I tak' me good care for heem," declared Pete, as he seized the unhappy Kelty by the collar, and, escorted by a crowd of grim and resolute men, led him back to the big camp. Even Kelty, with all his cool daring and self-assurance, was rendered uneasy by the ominous silence maintained by the crew.

"I tell you, boys, this is all a mistake. I didn't have any more to do with hurting Jim Benner than you did," he protested, in whining, wheedling tones.

"We see us 'bout dat," responded big Pete, briefly.

When Kelty fell asleep that night, he lay between Bedotte on one side and Pierre Daviau on the other, to both of whom he was securely tied by a big rope.

Great, therefore, was their rage and chagrin the following morning to find that, during the night, this rope had been cut, and their prisoner had made good his escape. It seemed incredible that he should have been able to accomplish this feat without arousing any of the men; but the fact remained that he had faded away without leaving any clue to the direction in which he had gone.

Mr. Collins, Norman, McMurray, and Fred Warner took turns sitting up with Benner during the night; but he lay in a dull stupor and did not recover consciousness.



About seven o'clock Dr. Pardee arrived on the scene, having made a quick drive across country with the Indian in response to Sol's urgent summons.

"It's a pretty serious case," he announced, when he had completed his examination of Benner. "The man's skull is crushed in above the right temple, and the brain is exposed. Some of the bone has penetrated the cerebrum."

"So he hasn't any show, has he?" asked McMurray.

"I didn't say that," responded the physician. "It's a bad blow, but much safer on the front than it would have been on the back of the head. It is necessary that a very delicate operation should be performed, and we must get him into the hospital at Aerie Lake as soon as possible." A little later Vede Pelotte's team, piled high with blankets and robes, to afford the suffering Benner the best possible bed, was on its slow way up Aerie Lake in charge of Harry McMurray and accompanied by Dr. Pardee.

It was speedily evident to Norman that the events of the previous night had wrought a great revulsion of feeling among the men so far as he was concerned. They began to give him their old friendly nods again, a little sheepishly, it is true, but with a very evident desire to return, by the quickest possible way, to the old friendly footing. This was made easy by the perfectly natural and cordial way in which Norman met their advances. It had been suddenly borne in upon



the men that if Farrow was capable of the murderous assault upon Jim Benner, he was equally capable of committing the various thefts from which the camp had suffered. This view was confirmed when Fred Warner improved the opportunity afforded by the absence of Norman, who was caring for Benner, to tell how they had caught Farrow in the very act of removing a partially filled bag from the oat house. Mr. Collins, whose views carried great weight with the men, also expressed the opinion that Farrow was the real thief, and the mere idea that a clean, honest boy like Norman could be guilty of anything of the kind was preposterous.

When Norman returned to the beaver house after breakfast he found Billy Eustace waiting for him there.

"I want you to go up with me, Norman," he said, "and show me just where Farrow left his horses when he came down and dug that bag out of the oat house."

"All right," responded Norman, as he led the way to the main road by the short cut back of the hovel. "There," he said, as he paused at the point of juncture, "they stood right back of those cedars."

Eustace stepped to the spot indicated, and took a careful look in every direction.

"Carver, I've been blind as a mole," he confessed, a moment later. "I've been unable to see how it was possible for any man to commit those thefts we've suffered from without getting caught, and here it shows



so plainly that anyone with ordinary sense and eyesight should have discovered it. I never once dreamed that there was such a hiding-place within a stone's throw of the camp. Norman," he added, extending his hand, "I beg your pardon. I deserve to be kicked to death by a parcel o' grasshoppers."

"Don't mention it," returned Norman, with a warm clasp of the proffered hand. "Your suspicions were quite natural under the circumstances."

"All the same I shall never forgive myself for having entertained them," rejoined Eustace. "It's a little the narrowest thing I was ever guilty of."



## CHAPTER XXII

### A JAUNT WITH THE SCALER

It was the middle of the next afternoon when Harry McMurray returned to the camp. He reported to Eustace and Norman, who were the only ones in the beaver house, that Benner had survived the operation at Aerie Lake hospital, and was resting quietly when he left him, although he had not yet regained consciousness.

"I found this in one of his pockets," he said, producing a much crumpled Boston newspaper. "Looks to me as if that bird has a considerable resemblance to our Farrow," he added, pointing to a portrait of Clouter Kelty.

"The very same man," declared Eustace, with conviction, after a brief glance at the portrait.

"It was taken from the rogues' gallery," continued McMurray, "and there's quite a long piece goes with it. Seems as if he were a pretty tough customer. Has robbed banks, done time, and, if the confession of one of his pals is true, is also a murderer. He skipped right out from under the officers' noses, while they had him in court. Reckon you may know something about him," he added, with a glance at Norman.



"Yes," admitted Norman. "I know quite a lot about him. I was in the court room when he made his sensational escape. I was the boy the paper speaks of who tried to stop him. Kelty and Farrow are one and the same man."

"Did you recognize him when he came here?" demanded McMurray.

"The minute I set my eyes on him."

"Why didn't you tell me?" asked Eustace, in a strained voice.

"Because I was given to understand that members of a woods crew were not expected to be informers or to do police duty," returned Norman.

"Did he know you?" inquired McMurray.

"Not at first. He did later. We talked it over together the Sunday after he came here, on the way back from Deer Trail pond. He gave me to understand that he wanted to go straight."

"But surely you must have suspected him of the thefts," broke in Eustace, sternly.

"I did; but I didn't see any way to fix them on him."

"I think I see your motive in keeping his secret," declared McMurray, slowly, "but it was a mistaken one. You should have told me or Billy as soon as you recognized him. If you had done this Jim Benner wouldn't, in all probability, be in the hospital at this time with his life hanging in the balance."

"That's true," supplemented Eustace.



"I don't know about that," declared Norman. "I rather think old Jim knew more about him than you think. He told me down on the landing one day that Farrow reminded him very much of a fellow named Fargo who murdered a man near where he was lumbering in Wisconsin some years ago. The woodsmen pursued him, but he was supposed to have broken through the ice and been drowned. They found a body in the water later in the spring that was thought to have been his."

"This goes far to account for the situation," said McMurray. "Old Jim got hold of this paper somewhere and flashed it up to him. Then he probably taunted him with the Wisconsin affair. That was his undoing. Kelty left his team behind the trees, and came back to lay him out. He meant to kill him."

"He never forgot or forgave the flogging Benner gave him with a salt codfish the first night in camp," remarked Norman.

"I never heard of that," said McMurray. "Got a little fresh, did he?"

"Yes, he got mad at something Jim said and intimated that he had tumbled into a drove of mules."

"Well, he had no one to blame but himself," was McMurray's comment. "If he'd had any horse-sense he'd have known better than to have made a crack like that."

"He was pretty hot under the collar when he did it," explained Norman.



"Well, even if he lost his head that time, I'll venture to say he never got hot enough to make any such break again," observed McMurray.

"Do you know," said Norman, "I don't believe Kelty knew Benner had that paper. If he had he'd certainly have taken it away with him."

"Carver's right," coincided Eustace, in a tone of conviction. "Jim may have put the story up to this fellow Kelty or Farrow, or whatever his name may be; but I'm satisfied that he never let on that he had the paper."

"Well, maybe that's so," conceded McMurray.

"Didn't get any clues on him, did you?" asked Norman.

"Not a smell. I've notified all the camps. There was an account of the assault on Jim wired away to the newspapers yesterday afternoon. I fancy, therefore, that it will not be an altogether easy matter for him to escape."

"He'll get short shrift, if the boys lay hands on him," said Eustace, grimly.

"I've thought of that," returned McMurray, in a troubled voice. "I know they're in an ugly mood just now; but they must let the law take its course. I reckon I'd better drop them a word of warning to-night."

"It won't come amiss, if you don't want that fellow lynched," assented Eustace.

"It wouldn't do at all," asserted McMurray, deci-



sively. "I'll put an emphatic stop to that idea right away."

There was an ominous quiet among the men, as they filed into camp a little later, at the close of the day's work. Every foot of the woods roads had been carefully scrutinized by them; but not a track had been discovered that would serve as a clue to the missing Kelty. Inasmuch, however, as all the roads were worn hard with travel this fact was not wholly surprising.

The members of the crew gathered eagerly around Harry McMurray when he visited their camp after supper, and inquired anxiously for Benner, expressing, with much sincerity, their hopes for his recovery. The walking boss improved the opportunity to warn them against any violent usage of the missing Kelty in case he should fall into their hands.

At McMurray's suggestion, Norman sat on the deacon seat and played a number of stirring airs on the banjo, with the result that the men forgetting, temporarily, the shadow that had been cast upon the spirits of the camp by the misfortune that had befallen Benner, were soon dancing up and down the camp floor with all the frolicsome abandon that is characteristic of a logging-crew at play.

The following morning, when he came out from breakfast, Norman found Mr. Collins waiting for him in front of the dingle.

"I had intended to go back to Camp 3 this morning," he said, "but on reflection I've decided to wait



till after dinner, and take a little circle through the woods. It occurred to me that, possibly, you might like to go along with me."

"I should be delighted to go," responded Norman, eagerly.

"Do you know," confided the scaler, a little later, as they were making their way on snow-shoes along a hardwood ridge, "I've been half in hopes we might strike that fellow Farrow's trail."

"Something like hunting for a needle in a haymow, isn't it?" asked Norman.

"Not so much as it might seem at first sight," answered the scaler. "The only way he could have got away without a trail would have been to have followed the beaten roads. That, I take it, is just what he did. Now he either had to go out to Gamewood siding along the tote-road, follow the trail of the oat teams to the back settlements or make for some hiding-place he'd prepared ahead. I'm pretty well convinced that the things he stole were really intended to equip some camp he'd found."

"Perhaps he built one," suggested Norman.

"No. I think not," dissented the scaler. "He hasn't had time. Besides, there are a number of old lumber camps in this section that he could have occupied, to say nothing of half a dozen or so built by gummers and trappers. He's probably utilized one of those."

"Very likely," acquiesced Norman.



"I thought if we circled the tote-roads, we might possibly find his track where he struck off from the logging road into the deep woods."

"I suppose you think I should have told what I knew about this man," said Norman.

"Yes. It would, in my opinion, have been the right thing for you to have done," returned the scaler.

"Still, I feel that your motives were all right in doing as you did. It isn't a wise thing for any man, especially a young man, to burden his life with too many secrets."

"I think that's so," agreed Norman. "What trees are those ahead?" he asked, abruptly changing the subject.

"Maples," replied the scaler.

"But see how rough the bark is," objected Norman.

"Yes. They are original growth, but maples just the same," insisted the scaler.

"How many kinds of maples grow here?"

"Well, these are rock maples, the same kind that are tapped in sugar-making. There are also, in this section, white maples, and the red or swamp maples that grow on the lowlands. Here is a tree you should learn to recognize," he added, pausing beside a small tree with dark bark.

"What is that?"

"It's a hornbeam — one of the strongest, toughest woods that grows in our Maine forests. It makes excellent handles for axes or other tools, and is also used for tips on fishing rods, being both close-grained



and elastic. It is not a tree that attains any great size."

"What a population there must be in the woods," observed Norman, pointing to the tracks that dotted the snow.

"Yes, a person traveling through the woods sees but a small part of its life," returned the scaler.

"I feel as if the wild things of the woods were hiding all about me, and peeking out to laugh at me," confessed Norman.

"I'll venture to say that they would see you, under 'most any circumstances, a great deal oftener than you would see them. Nature protects its wild creatures by giving them wonderfully acute senses. Their keenness of scent, in particular, is marvelously well developed."

"Couldn't some of these wild animals, like moose and deer, be tamed, and made to serve domestic purposes?" asked Norman.

"No. I think not. It is not a difficult task to tame either a moose or a deer — especially when they are caught young. I had a fawn at my house last summer that would follow the children about with all the devotion of a dog, and a neighbor of mine had a buck deer his boys had brought up on a bottle, that fed in his orchard as tame as a sheep. In the fall, however, he went off in the woods, and I reckon our fawn went with him. Anyway she disappeared at about the same time."

"It was 'the call of the wild,'" remarked Norman.



"Yes," assented the scaler. "it isn't an easy matter for man or beast to get away from inherited instincts. A good many years ago Colonel Jim Gerrish tried domesticating moose. He had a theory that Nature intended them for beasts of burden in this section. So he tamed a couple of them and broke them to harness."

"Did they go well?"

"First-rate, when they *did* go; but the Colonel found out a good many things about moose that he didn't know before. One was the contrary nature of the beasts. He never could tell what new freak was going to possess them. From first to last they were mighty uncertain quantities."

The scaler paused and indulged in a reminiscent chuckle.

"Gid Shriver told me once," he resumed, presently, "of a ride he had in the old days after Long Jim's famous moose team. It was Sunday, and the Colonel, anxious to show off his pets, suggested to old Gid, who was visiting his camp, that they take the moose team and enjoy a spin down to the camp of old Lige Medway, on the Skittecook dead water, about twenty miles away. Gid was nothing loath, and so they started out. The roads were in prime condition, and the way those moose bowled along set Gid's blood all a-tingle. He always allowed that it was about the most exhilarating ride he ever enjoyed. As the moose went kicking the miles out behind them Long Jim expanded his chest, and expatiated with a good deal of pride and enthu-



siasm on the bright future that was in store for the moose as a draft animal. He was right in the midst of his eulogy when the moose he was driving suddenly bolted out of the road, jumped two or three windfalls, and went to browsing very calmly upon some scrub cedars that had attracted their attention. The Colonel, in some mysterious way, had managed to keep his seat; but poor old Gid had been bounced out, as they went over the first windfall, and nearly buried in the deep snow. They finally managed to get their team back into the road, and started on again. Gid wanted to go back; but the Colonel wouldn't hear to it. He said he'd started out for Lige Medway's camp, and by the Great Horn Spoon he was going there. They started on again, and all at once those critters took it into their crazy heads to race. Gid said the pace they struck was simply terrifying. His hair stood on end, for he was confident that if they should meet a team, or if it should occur to the moose to bolt from the road again, he and the Colonel would stand a good chance of being pitchpoled into the next township. However, the things we worry about the most don't generally come to pass in this life. After a spell, the Colonel got his team down to a normal gait, and pulled up at Medway's camp in fairly good order. Coming back old Gid was forced to admit that the conduct of the moose was above criticism. They made the twenty miles without a break, and in incredibly quick time. All the same, Gid didn't enjoy the ride for a minute.



‘I was afeared all th’ time,’ he said, ‘of what th’ blamed critters *might* do.’ That was the trouble with those moose from first to last. They weren’t dependable. Couldn’t count on them from one minute to another. No one ever knew just what they would do next. They grew more and more cranky and contrary as time went on, and even Long Jim, tenacious as he was in most matters, was obliged to give them up. He turned them loose in the big woods when he broke camp in the spring, and that’s the last attempt I know of in these parts to use moose for draft purposes. They’ve got the speed and endurance all right; but they lack in disposition.”

During the scaler’s narrative they came down from the ridge into a stretch of black growth.

Midway of this Mr. Collins paused and glanced intently at the hollow end of an immense pine windfall.

“Looks like live stock here,” he announced, briefly. “See how that end is sealed up with moss?”

“Yes,” said Norman, “but I should never have noticed it if you hadn’t called my attention to it. What do you think is in there?”

“Bears.”

“Bears!” repeated Norman in consternation.

“Wouldn’t surprise me a bit,” declared the scaler, coolly, as he pulled a heavy Colt’s revolver from a leather holster that hung on his belt. “Just take this axe, and pound along on the outside of the log. I’ll stay here by the end of it, and see what develops.”



Norman did as directed, but without result.

"Pretty sleepy," commented the scaler. "Let's see what this will do," he added, as he pulled a match from his pocket and lighted it. Bending forward he touched the blaze to the moss in the end of the log and almost immediately a black smoke burst from it — only to be caught, and forced backward by a stiff breeze that was blowing through the forest. There was an unmistakable commotion inside the big tree. A moment later the burning moss was pushed out upon the snow, and a black head appeared, growling and coughing. Two quick shots from the scaler's revolver brought the bear to an abrupt stop. Stepping forward, Mr. Collins grasped the dead bruin by the ears and pulled her out upon the snow. She was a gaunt female, whose thin sides bore evidence of a winter's fast. No sooner had he pulled her from the log than Mr. Collins again drew his revolver. He had not a moment to spare, for almost immediately a cub, three-quarters grown, came tumbling out of the log, only to share the fate of the mother. This evidently cleared the den, for, although Norman pounded along the entire length of the log, and Mr. Collins gathered moss for another smudge, no more bears put in an appearance.

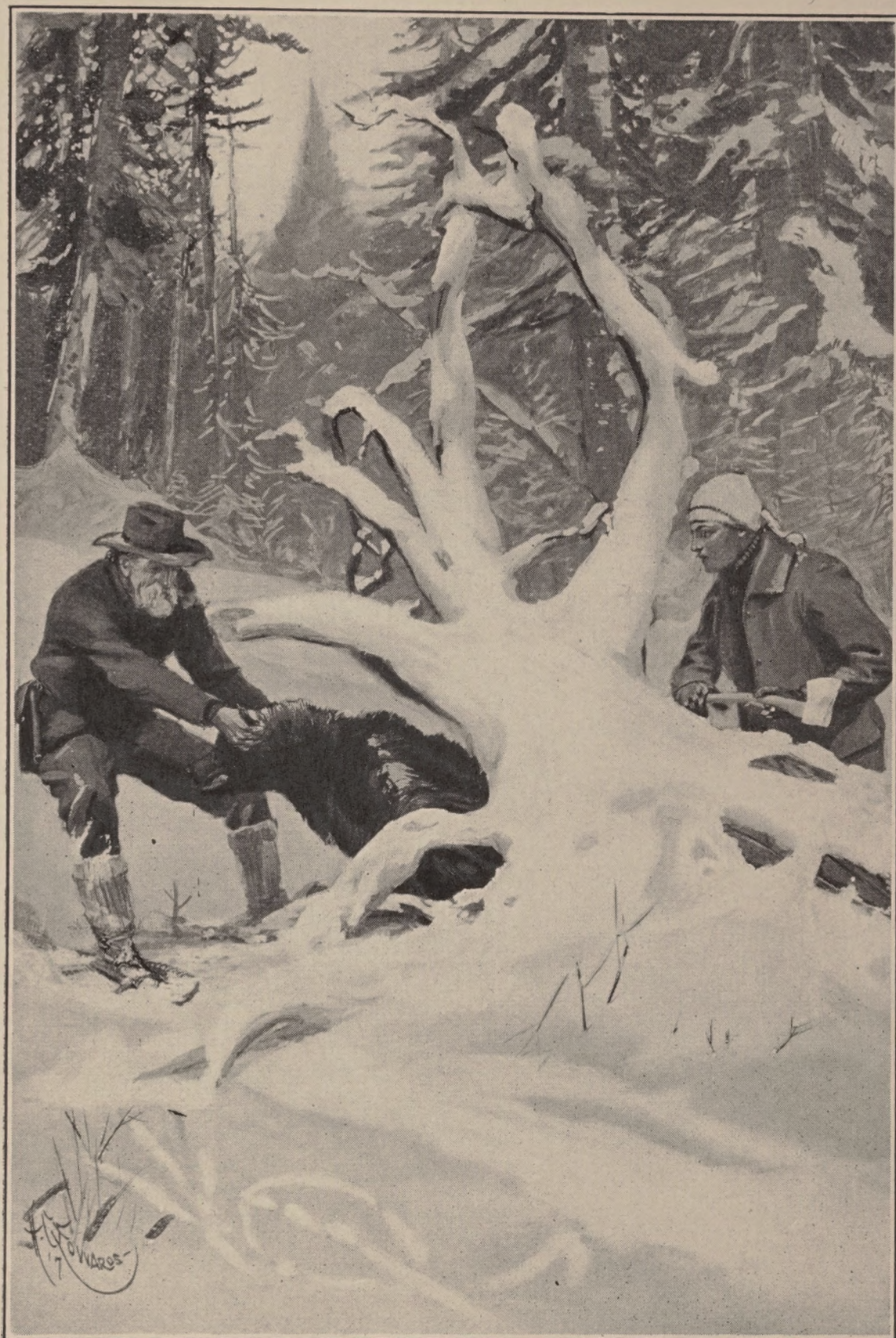
"What shall we do with them?" asked Norman.

"Take the pelts and leave the carcasses," responded Mr. Collins.

"But isn't the meat good to eat?"

"Not specially, under the most favorable circum-





MR. COLLINS GRASPED THE DEAD BRUIN BY THE EARS.—*Page 300.*







stances. At this reason of the year, however, it's strong enough to be rank. I reckon it's better for the foxes than it would be for us."

In a short time, with a deftness and skill that was surprising to Norman, Mr. Collins had removed the skins from the two bears.

"Not in prime condition," he said, as he rolled them together, preparatory to tying them upon his back. "Still, they might be a good deal worse."

"Let me carry at least one of them," insisted Norman.

"No. I'm good for them," returned Mr. Collins. "You may carry the axe, though, if you wish."

"Do you know," said Norman, as they resumed their tramp, "that didn't seem a bit like a bear hunt to me."

"Well, we didn't have to hunt much for that pair," admitted the scaler. "They were simply waiting for us."

"But you were so cool — so matter of fact about it," pursued Norman.

"I'll admit that a black bear does not stir my blood very much," said the scaler, "especially when I come upon him in winter quarters. They are about the most timid animals in our Maine woods, so far as men are concerned. It's simply amazing what a lot of ground they'll cover in a day. They are also wonderfully keen of scent, and for that reason are rarely come upon in the big woods. I've killed a great many of



them in my day — most of them with the aid of traps.”

Nothing further occurred to lend excitement to their trip. Although they circled a good portion of the Camp 4 cuttings, they found no tracks indicating the direction in which Kelty had made his escape. It was after two o'clock when they finally reached the camp. Norman was tired and hungry; but Mr. Collins, while he did ample justice to the generous repast provided by Felix Lamarre, was, apparently, as fresh as when he started out in the morning.

“I rather think Kelty followed the road to the back settlements,” he said, as he was preparing to leave for Camp 3. “He’s probably in Canada by this time. I’ll take these bear skins along with me and have them tanned. Then I’ll express them to your father with our compliments.”

“You ought to keep them yourself,” protested Norman.

“I couldn’t think of it,” responded the scaler, over his shoulder, as he went, with long, swinging stride, down the tote-road in the direction of Camp 3.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE LAIR OF THE OUTLAW

Several weeks went by, following the escape of Clouter Kelty, without any trace of him having been discovered. It was the general opinion among the men at Camp 4 that he had made his way along the road traversed by the oat teams, to what were known as the "back settlements." From there it was easy enough to pass into Canada.

Baptiste Groder, who had associated more with the missing ruffian than any other member of the crew, stated that he had once seen Kelty exhibit a big roll of bills, many of which appeared to be of large denominations. It was evident, therefore, that his escape had been in nowise retarded by lack of funds.

Jim Benner was reported to be gaining slowly at the Aerie Lake hospital, but his mind was not yet clear, and he had no recollection whatever of the affair on the landing.

Life at Camp 4 was one ceaseless round of vigorous and sustained effort. Notwithstanding that March was nearing its end, the woods roads were still in excellent condition, and the work of transporting the logs from the yards to the landings went forward with



feverish energy — each team striving to outdo the others.

The masterful spirit of Harry McMurray seemed to pervade and dominate the whole section, imbuing every man in the employ of the Lakeland Lumber Company with its own force and courage. The walking boss was certainly leading "the strenuous life." He was indefatigable. The long woods miles had no terrors for him, and he passed rapidly from camp to camp urging the men to the utmost of their powers, and utilizing with the promptness of the woods general every phase of the situation that could, by any inspiration of genius, be made to hurry forward the work. The men under him were proud of their own prowess, and devotedly loyal to their leader.

Something of this spirit was felt by Norman Carver, as he made his way alone on snow-shoes, through the big woods one Sunday afternoon near the close of the month. He felt that he was a private in a division of the great army of industry that was fighting the battles of civilization. In this warfare men went down to the sea in ships; they threw their networks of steel across dizzy chasms and over roaring torrents; they delved down into the bowels of the earth; they braved the ice and snow of the northern wilderness, with its wind-swept solitudes and ever present dangers; they planted their banners of development and progress on the very outposts of Nature's resources. It was an army full of nameless heroes and unnoted heroisms, doing its



mighty work resolutely, ceaselessly, uncomplainingly, with the same tenacious hardihood, and unconscious daring, that has fought and won the great battles of the ages. Here in the primeval forest, its forces were conquering the mighty resources of the wilderness, and converting them to the uses of far-off cities and towns — rendering them tribute to the spirit of home building that lies at the very foundation of civic unity and Christian progress. It was a warfare with elemental forces, waged under the direction of dauntless leadership, and inspired with the restless, militant spirit, that has always been characteristic of the pioneer's life. And he was a part of it all! The thought quickened Norman's pulses, and filled his heart with a determination to do well his part, however humble and inconspicuous it might be.

Engrossed in his own reflections, Norman made his way through the woods at a rate of speed that would have been impossible to him a few weeks before. A partridge rose with a startled whirr from the branches of a yellow birch above his head, and winged her rapid way down the side of the ridge to the black growth in the hollow; but he gave her scarcely a glance. He pushed on through the woods until he finally came, down a sharp pitch, to the shore of Deer Trail Pond. He paused and looked out carefully upon its snow-covered surface; but no sign of life met his gaze. A cold wind swept unchecked across the wintry plain, and swayed the tops of the big spruces. It had already



commenced to spit snow, and with the feeling that a blustering, stormy night was before him, Norman turned to retrace his steps. As he did so he caught sight of Isaac Solstein's camp, standing upon its little peninsula, and half hidden in its thicket of firs.

Moved by a sudden impulse, Norman decided to give this picturesque structure a somewhat closer inspection. Following along the shore of the pond he came, presently, to the narrow neck of land, with its heavy growth of evergreens, upon which the wealthy New Yorker, with an eye for scenic charm, had built his sporting lodge. Winding his way among the trees he came, in a short time, to the rear of the structure, which, contrary to the established rule in the big woods, was plentifully supplied with windows. Their curtains were drawn, however, and they seemed to Norman to look out upon him in a distinctly cold and repellent spirit. He paused for a moment to study the building, with its peeled logs and plumbed lines so different from the rude buildings of Camp 4, and then passed around to the front piazza. This he was surprised to find entirely free from snow. Evidently someone had taken the trouble to shovel it off. As he looked, Norman was still more astonished to see a well-worn snow-shoe trail leading from a clump of firs to the steps of the opposite side of the piazza from where he stood. Resolved to look further into the matter, he walked around the front of the camp and examined this trail with critical care. It was well trodden, and gave evidence of having been



used a number of times. It occurred to Norman, however, that the party who had come and gone in it had exercised great care to confine his movements strictly within its limits. The only other tracks about the premises were those which Norman had just made.

The vague feeling of mystery and uncertainty that Norman felt in the presence of this trail was speedily dispelled.

"Well, does everything suit you?" asked a familiar voice near him.

Norman straightened himself with a start, finding it somewhat difficult to credit the evidence of his senses. He rubbed his eyes, mechanically, with his hand to make sure that they were not deceiving him; but there was no doubt about the unwelcome vision that confronted them.

Standing a short distance away up the trail, between two bushy fir-trees, was Clouter Kelty! The outlaw carried Norman's double-barreled shotgun over his shoulder, while at his belt, in a leather case, hung a heavy revolver which Norman recognized as one of the articles that had been stolen from the men.

"You don't seem real glad to see me, old pal," continued Kelty, in cold, metallic tones, as he stepped from between the sheltering trees into the trail, at the same time bringing into view the snow-shoes that had been purloined from Harry McMurray. "I said you didn't seem glad to see me," he repeated, in a louder tone, as Norman continued to gaze at him in silent wonder.



"I certainly didn't expect to find you here," returned Norman, rousing himself with a start.

"If you had, I bet you wouldn't have come," returned Kelty, grimly.

"On the contrary, I think I should," said Norman.

"And with the whole gang of 'em at your back," rejoined Kelty, bitterly. "Now, youngster, it won't pay for you and me to have any misunderstandings. Pretence and blarney may be all right among the nabobs; but it doesn't cut any ice with me. I know you don't like me. In fact, you haven't the slightest use for me. It would simply give you a better appetite for dinner to see me strapped in the electric chair," he added, fiercely.

"No — no," protested Norman. "You are mistaken about that."

"Perhaps I am," responded Kelty; "but I doubt it. Let me tell you one thing, however," he added, vehemently. "I shall never go there."

The outlaw's face was hideous in its drawn and haggard outlines, and his voice fairly hissed in its intensity.

"I hope not," said Norman.

Kelty regarded him for a moment with curious interest.

"Blamed if I'm not half minded to believe you," he declared. "You're a puzzle I haven't been able to solve."

"I certainly haven't been responsible for any of your troubles," asserted Norman.



"No," admitted Kelty. "I don't think you have. It's been a mystery to me why you didn't peach on me at the start; but for some reason you didn't. I give you credit for that."

He paused and eyed Norman with wrinkled brows.

"I don't know whether I'm glad to see you or not," he said. "Don't s'pose you have any question of that kind," he added.

"No," admitted Norman.

"You're honest — if not complimentary," returned Kelty. "Well, go into the house."

Norman hesitated.

"Go into the house," repeated Kelty, sharply. "You may as well know that you are somewhat of a white elephant on my hands, Carver," he added. "I didn't invite you here, and you're a good deal more likely to continue in good health, if you do just what I say, and do it promptly. Move!"

Norman turned about and started towards the piazza of the camp. He had an uncomfortable feeling that Kelty was covering him with the hammerless shotgun which he had lowered into the hollow of his arm, and which, he had no doubt, was in readiness for instant use.

"Halt," commanded Kelty, as he reached the foot of the steps.

Norman stopped abruptly.

"Take off those snow-shoes," ordered the outlaw. "It's likely to be some little time before you need them



again," he added, as Norman made haste to comply with his wishes.

Hot words rose to Norman's lips. Kelty's effrontery was certainly hard to bear. He recognized, however, that he had a wicked, desperate man to deal with, and wisely held his peace.

"I guess I'll follow suit," declared Kelty, and dropping, first on one knee and then on the other, he quickly removed his snow-shoes, and followed Norman up the steps to the piazza.

"Walk right in. Don't stop to rap," he commanded, as they reached the front door.

The camp which Norman entered was a decided improvement over anything of the kind he had yet seen. It was a large room with good-sized windows, and well-laid board floors. A short flight of stairs led to a floor above, which was divided into three small bedrooms. At the end of the big room on the lower floor was a door leading into an adjoining shed kitchen, fully equipped with a modern cooking-range, and a generous assortment of culinary utensils. One corner of the big living-room was filled with an enormous fireplace built of rough stone. In another corner, Kelty had set up one of the beds which he had brought from the loft. Deer and bear skin rugs covered a considerable portion of the floor. There were a number of big rocking-chairs, scattered about the room, and an immense cupboard filled one of the open places between the windows. This, Norman discovered later, con-



tained nearly everything that could add to the comfort and convenience of a camp outfit.

"Well, how does it suit you?" asked Kelty.

"It's fine," declared Norman.

"Here, let me relieve you," continued the outlaw, and taking Norman's snow-shoes he stood them with his over in a corner of the camp.

"Sit down by the fireplace, and we'll have a nice chat together, as soon as I get this fire to going," he continued, pointing to the big chunks of wood piled upon the massive andirons, which were evidently the handiwork of some rural blacksmith.

Norman, wondering vaguely at the outlaw's unexpected good-nature, complied with his request. Kelty touched a match to the birch bark beneath the fire logs, and a moment later the great fireplace was a mass of flame that roared up the big chimney and lit up the spacious room.

Outside the wind was rapidly rising and the snow falling in constantly increasing volume, but inside was a scene of comfort and cheer which even the repulsive features of Kelty could not wholly dispel.

For a moment the outlaw stood looking at Norman with lowering brows.

"How many people knew you came here?" he demanded.

"No one," rejoined Norman.

"Didn't you start out to come here?"

"No. That was an afterthought. I haven't been



here since we had that famous fish dinner on the pond."

Kelty's features relaxed.

"I didn't know but what you were working out some part of a plan," he said, in a tone of relief.

"No. I had no plan whatever when I left camp this morning, except to enjoy a good tramp," said Norman.

"You and I might as well have a square understanding at the start, Carver," declared the outlaw, as he drew a rocking-chair to the opposite side of the fire a moment later. "If you behave yourself, you won't find me half as bad a fellow as you think me; but if you try to escape —" he paused, ominously.

"Well, what then?" asked Norman.

"I'll shoot you with as little hesitation as I would a yellow dog," declared Kelty, in cold, even tones.

"I don't doubt it," admitted Norman.

"I'm glad to see you exhibiting a little horse-sense," declared Kelty. "There's a shotgun and a rifle in the corner —"

"Yes," interposed Norman. "I've seen them before."

"Necessity knows no law," rejoined Kelty, coolly. "You may help yourself to either one of those weapons any time you choose; but they won't do you any good. I've removed the cartridges from each of them, and have put the ammunition in a place where you won't be likely to find it. The only loaded weapon in this



camp is this revolver in my belt. It is a self-cocker and you'll notice that the holster is open. So long as you play fair we shall get along all right; but if you show any signs of treachery — if you try the slightest funny business, I'll kill you just as surely as you sit in that chair."

"How long are you going to keep me here?" demanded Norman.

"I don't know. You surely can't leave to-night. Hark!" he added, as the wind whistled dismally up the pond, and dashed flurries of snow against the window-panes. "You couldn't think of going out alone in such a storm. It's getting worse every minute. I tell you we're going to have a wild night. You'll be a mighty sight safer with me than you would be outside. Looks to me as if we were going to have the line-storm. You're lucky to be right here with me."

"It begins to look that way," assented Norman.

"Had any supper?"

"No."

"Well, I'm going to get some. You can come into the kitchen or stay here, just as you choose."

"Thanks," returned Norman. "This fire looks pretty cheerful. I think I'll stay here."

Kelty walked to the corner of the room, and picked up the snow-shoes.

"You won't mind it, pal, if I take these into the kitchen with me," he said. "You're a mighty smart little shaver; but I think you understand the situation



too well and have got too much brains to try wading in this storm."

"I certainly shouldn't want to if I were not obliged to," rejoined Norman. His heart sank within him, as he perceived how effectually Kelty had shut off any chance for escape. Even with his snow-shoes the attempt to reach camp in such a storm would have been hazardous. Without them it would have been suicide. Plainly he was in for a night with the outlaw, and while the outlook was not an encouraging one, he determined to make the best of it, and, if possible, keep his companion in good humor.

"You can pull that small table up by the fireplace and set it, after you get thawed out a bit," said Kelty, pausing in the doorway to the kitchen. "You'll find all the dishes you need in that cupboard there. His nibs has given us a good outfit; nothing small or mean about him."

Norman rose and drawing the table which Kelty had indicated before the fireplace, proceeded to set it for two people. He found that Kelty had told the truth about the camp outfit. The supply of dishes and tableware was ample to have met the needs of a large company. As he worked, he heard the rattle of dishes in the kitchen, and caught the savory odor of cooking meat.

Presently Kelty entered the room with a big platter of meat, and a pot of steaming tea.

"Good job, pal! You are certainly a genuine dining-



room artist," he said, approvingly, as he noted the table.

He sat down the tea and meat, and went back to the kitchen, from which he presently returned with a plate of pilot-bread.

"This is the whole bill o' fare, pal," he announced. "Pull up your chair and lay to. We haven't got quite the variety you might find at Young's or the Parker house; but so far as we go, we have the very best the market affords. I think you'll like that lamb steak."

"Lamb?" repeated Norman, in a puzzled tone.

Kelty indulged in a short and somewhat mirthless laugh.

"That's what they call it in close time," he explained.

"Oh, I see — it's deer meat," said Norman.

"That's about the size of it," declared the outlaw, coolly. "I found a yard of them back from the pond a piece, and didn't have any trouble at all in getting a couple. I think I could get venison enough in this country to live on the year round."

"But the game wardens —" began Norman.

"Are the least of my troubles," declared Kelty.

A momentary scowl distorted his features.

"It wouldn't be well for one of them if he tried to interfere with me," he added, in a menacing tone.

"I'm not on such good terms with society that any man can afford to meddle with me. Hoe in there, pal. There's plenty more where that came from."

Norman needed no second invitation, and was soon



eating the delicious venison with a relish and appetite that he would not have thought possible an hour before.

He wondered how long the outlaw's good nature would last, and whether, after all, his seeming hospitality did not mask some sinister purpose.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### WITH CLOUTER KELTY AT SOLSTEIN'S CAMP

"Are you long on dishwashing?" asked Kelty, as they rose from the table.

"I'm no expert," returned Norman, "still I've helped Fred Warner now and then."

"You'll do," asserted the outlaw. "You wash and I'll wipe. I've tried to keep this camp clean. It was a trick my old mother taught me. She died when I was a boy."

Plainly Kelty was in a mellow mood, and Norman was surprised to see a softer look on his coarse and brutal features.

The water was soon in readiness, and while Norman stood by the kitchen sink and washed the supper dishes, Kelty wiped them and put them away.

"Good job," commented the outlaw, with evident satisfaction, when the task was completed. "Now I guess we'll thaw out a little bed clothing for you. Go up-stairs, and I'll show you where it is."

Norman did as directed, closely followed by Kelty.

"We'll take down the single iron bedstead in this little back room," announced the outlaw. "Just think of it! box springs and a hair mattress! That old



buck took his woods life with limitations. No boughs playing horse with his backbone! No, sir. He preferred to smell 'em on the trees. It's an honor to use the stuff of a fellow like him. About the only way, I guess, the world will ever get any return for the money he's filched from it. There's two kind of thieves, pal, those who do their stealing on the outside, and those who do their stealing on the inside of the line we call 'law.' Bless you, I know this old Solstein, cold-blooded stock gambler, and market manipulator; a fellow who has heaped up millions by buying the people's rights from corrupt legislatures. Talk about thieves! That old reprobate has stolen his thousands where I've taken pennies. But see the difference! He's respectable. People look up to him. Has his box springs and hair mattresses even up here in the home of the bough bed. He's the 'honorable' — doesn't that phase you? — the 'honorable' Mr. Solstein, while I — ha! — I'm an outcast and a renegade, hiding like a pariah from the face of man!"

While he talked he had been busy with Norman taking apart the bed. In a short time they had carried it down-stairs and had set it up in the big living-room, while the bedding was desposed on chairs in a wide circle about the cheerful heat of the fireplace.

Into this circle Kelty and Norman drew a couple of comfortable rockers, and seated themselves in the genial glow of the burning logs. The roaring flames lit up the room with a weird light that softened into shadows



in the far corners. In their near glare the hideous features of Kelty were brought out in sharp relief, and Norman felt that this man would never permit either the restraints of law or considerations of humanity to stand in the way of the accomplishment of his purposes; that he was a man utterly without conscience — a mere brute creature of impulse and passion.

Seated before the fire, the outlaw was silent for a time, his scowling features giving evidence of bitter thoughts as he slowly filled his corn-cob pipe with tobacco which he cut with his dirk-bladed hunting knife from a long, black plug. Norman recognized the knife with its deer-hoof handle as the one that had been stolen with other articles from his extender; but he forbore to comment. Having filled and lighted his pipe the outlaw closed the knife, and returned it to his pocket. He blew a few reflective whiffs up the big fireplace, and, presently, returned again to the subject which appeared to be uppermost in his thoughts.

“Do you know, pal,” he declared, solemnly, “that this world is full of thieves?”

“And also lots of good people,” declared Norman.

“That’s a side of life I haven’t seen much of,” declared Kelty; “but I know a heap about the other. The big thieves usually go free. It’s mostly the unlucky little ones like me that get pinched, and have to do time.”

Norman made no reply. He was thinking how strongly the experiences of an evil life, and the pas-



sions of an evil mind, make their marks upon a human countenance.

"I hold," declared Kelty, after a moment's pause, "that the world owes every one a living."

"I don't agree with you," declared Norman. "The world owes us nothing — except as we contribute to its progress and welfare."

"You and I could never agree on things," declared the outlaw. "You were born with a gold spoon in your mouth. If you'd had the hard knocks I have you'd look at things differently."

"I don't think so," insisted Norman.

"It isn't likely that you would," declared Kelty. "I've been trying to decide whether I was glad to have you here or not," he added, fixing Norman with his small, weasel-like eyes. "In a way you're an incumbrance, and I don't know exactly how I'm going to unload you. I suppose those fellows at Camp 4 will scour the whole country for you as soon as this storm is over."

"You didn't expect to stay here right along, did you?" asked Norman.

"No. I knew I should have to clear out sooner or later; but I wanted matters to settle down a little before I started."

He paused and puffed at his pipe a short time in moody silence.

"I don't believe any living creature was ever meant to be alone," he resumed, presently. "I've been com-



fortable enough here, heaven knows, but I honestly think I was better contented when I was doing time. The solitude — the eternal feeling of remoteness and silence — has almost driven me crazy. There's been many an hour since I've been here that I would have given all I had for someone to talk to."

"You've been about as bad off as Robinson Crusoe," suggested Norman.

"Worse," declared Kelty. "He had his poll parrot, and, later, his Man Friday."

"That's now my role, I take it," said Norman.

"I'd give a good deal to feel that you'd be as loyal to me as Man Friday was to Crusoe," asserted Kelty, "but I know you are not. You eat my bread. You accept my shelter from the storm, and yet you would not hesitate to turn me over to the officers of the law — even though you knew you were sending me to an ignominious death."

"I might have done all that some time ago," responded Norman, "but I haven't."

"That's so," admitted Kelty. "That's what's puzzled me."

"It's a pretty good plan to judge people by their acts," suggested Norman.

"It's better not to trust them at all," rejoined Kelty. "Hark!" he added, abruptly. "How would you like to be out in that?"

With the going down of the sun the storm had increased in violence. The wind howled among the



groaning trees in a gale, tearing off big limbs and now and then sending an aged giant of the forest crashing down upon the earth. Great gusts of snow pelted insistently against the window-panes.

"A thousand demons are ranging the wood to-night," declared Kelty. "I've heard 'em before. I'm not afraid of dead men, pal; but I'll admit that these voices of the woods have made me feel mighty creepy at times, especially on cold, stormy nights."

He lapsed into moody silence, puffing furiously at his pipe, and blowing big clouds of smoke up the chimney.

"I was going through the woods one windy day," he resumed, after an interval, "and a big windfall came crashing down so near that one of its limbs upended me into the snow. It seemed like the call of fate. I couldn't help thinking what a horrible thing it would have been if it had pinned me down and left me helpless, and alone, to die of hunger and cold."

Again he paused, and a suggestion of horror shone from his small, round eyes. "When I go," he said, "I want to go out quickly. How's Benner?"

"He's living, and gaining slowly."

"I owed that fellow one," rejoined Kelty, bitterly. "He went out of his way to do me a wrong. He acted the part of a coward, and insulted and humiliated me. Moreover, he had his plans all laid to pursue me further. I'm not denying that I had it in for him, and yet if he hadn't kept after me, and tantalized me,



I should never have got after him in the way I did. Curse him! He knew too much, and I don't allow any man to bully or threaten me. I was fair. I gave him his chance, and he threw it away. He thought he had me foul, and gloated over me."

He rose from his chair and walked nervously up and down the room.

"Oh, how I hated that fellow!" he muttered, in a voice hoarse with passion. "I could have torn his yellow heart out with a relish."

Kelty's features were contorted with rage. He looked more like a beast of prey than a human being, and Norman shuddered involuntarily at the sight of him.

Presently the outlaw's passion seemed to have exhausted itself. He sank back into his chair, and indulged in a low, savage laugh.

"It always hairs me up to think of that old skunk," he said, "but what's the use. I've squared my account with him. I've paid him in full with interest, and the books are closed. I suppose you think I did wrong?" he said, with a searching glance at Norman.

"I don't think it's a good thing for any man to take the law into his own hands."

"Law!" repeated Kelty, derisively. "Law! ha, ha, that word makes me sick. Don't you know there is no law for me? Don't you know that I am a fugitive, a renegade, an outcast? Old Benner could put me to slow torture. He could pester and nag me until I



nearly went crazy, and still be on the safe side of the law. There was only one recourse for me. I made my own law and saw that it was duly executed. I say let every man be a law unto himself."

"The law that protects one man in his rights protects all other men," said Norman. "Surely you can't expect license for yourself, and restraint for everyone else."

"I didn't intend to invade anyone's rights — if they'd left me alone," protested Kelty. "I knew that sooner or later I'd got to get out, and I planned to stock up this camp so as to stay here a spell when the time came to quit."

"With other people's property," suggested Norman.

"There wasn't anything but what the company and the rest of you could well afford to spare," growled Kelty, resentfully. "It was just a little collection I took up — like passing the plate at church — to help out a good cause. I felt that all of you ought to be willing to do that much for a fellow who was down in his luck. As for the pork and beans, and other supplies I took from the company, I felt they owed me all and more than I took. They only half paid me, anyway."

"I've been told they pay the best wages of any company operating in this part of Maine," asserted Norman, with spirit.

"Perhaps so," admitted Kelty, grudgingly, "but all the same I never felt that I was getting any more than



should come to me by good rights, when I helped myself to a few of their supplies. You and Warner did a neat piece of work when you discovered my system; but you'd never thought of it in the world if they hadn't tumbled to the banjo. I fancy I played you a pretty cool bluff, though," he added, with a chuckle. "Guess I had the both of you on the run."

"We couldn't seem to put our fingers on you," agreed Norman.

"I found out a good while ago that nothing was ever gained by getting rattled," asserted Kelty. "I've pulled out of some pretty tight places before now by keeping cool. I want you to remember this, pal, I have never done bodily injury except to those who have pestered me or undertaken to hinder me in the exercise of my own freedom."

Norman looked at the outlaw curiously. It seemed to him incredible that Kelty could be sincere in his attempt at self-defence; but he was not familiar with the sophistries by which criminals attempt to justify their conduct.

"It seems to me," he said, "that, for a man who is so jealous of his own feelings and rights, you have had mighty little regard for the rights and sensibilities of others."

"You and I can never look at things alike — so it is wasting time to discuss such matters," growled Kelty. "I didn't bring you here to preach me any sermons. I guess we'll adjourn this Sunday-school. When you



get older, if you should happen to, you'll know more, and be wiser."

"I've been wondering just why you did bring me here," said Norman, improving the opportunity to change the subject.

"I didn't bring you here," returned Kelty. "You came. Under the circumstances, with this storm coming on, there didn't seem to be anything else for me to do but to take you in and look out for you."

"You are very kind," returned Norman.

"I don't know whether you really mean that or not," said Kelty, "but if you were a little better acquainted with me you'd think so."

He rose from his chair, placed his pipe on a shelf made by a projecting flat stone in the fireplace, and stood for a moment regarding Norman in silence.

"I don't want you to say that I ever had you under restraint," he announced, presently. "I have never been in the kidnapping business." He walked to the front door and threw it open. An angry gust of wind, thick with sifting snow, came roaring into the room, sending the big sparks whirling in a glowing column, up the great chimney, blowing out the lamps, and filling the dark apartment with the icy chill of winter.

A moment later Norman heard the door close again, and by the light from the fireplace saw the form of Kelty outlined in the darkness as he slid the big bolt into place.

"Carver," he called from the shadows, "I don't



want you to feel that you are a prisoner. You can go now if you choose, yes, and take with you all your property, both that you brought with you, and that which I have borrowed of you. If you stay with me under this roof to-night it must be of your own free will."

"Of course I want to stay with you," said Norman, hastily. "You know very well it would be suicide for me to go out at this hour, and in this storm."

"I'm glad you recognize that fact, pal," said Kelty. "You know now that if I were inclined to do you physical injury I would only have to drive you from this shelter, and Nature would dispose of you."

"I know that perfectly well," acquiesced Norman.

"I don't think the fool-killer will ever have any use for you," declared Kelty. "I guess you and I understand one another. If we do, there need never be any trouble between us. You needn't bother to light those lamps again. It's time to go to bed."

Norman, following Kelty's example, drew off his leggings and moccasins, and placed them upon one side of the fireplace.

"Feet wet?" inquired the outlaw.

"No."

"Well, you'd better put those leggings where they'll warm up a little over night, and toast your feet a bit before you turn in."

"Thanks," returned Norman, surprised at the suggestion. "I think that's good advice."



For a moment they sat in silence before the fire, now burning low, with their feet extended towards its glowing coals.

"You've had a better education than most men who work in the woods," ventured Norman, breaking a silence that was beginning to grow oppressive.

"How do you know?" demanded Kelty, sharply.

"Oh, I judged from your talk," rejoined Norman.

"I've had a good many things I didn't deserve," declared Kelty. He seemed about to add something further; but paused abruptly, and reaching forward took his pipe from the rock shelf, produced the knife and black plug from his pocket, and proceeded to fill it with laborious care.

"Turn in when you like," he said. "You needn't wait for me. Think I'll sit up awhile, and smoke another pipe."

Norman removed his sweater, and hung it upon a chair with his sheep-skin lined coat. Then, without further undressing, he laid down on the bed that had been prepared for him.

In the big woods outside he heard the mournful wailing of the winds, and the groaning of tall trees as they swayed beneath the driving force of the storm.

He was unable to account for Kelty's friendly attitude, and he could not resist the fear that back of it all might lie plans and purposes that boded him no good.

Several times he roused himself as he was drowsing off to sleep, only to find the outlaw bent forward in



the soft glow of the dying fire, moodily puffing his cob-pipe.

Presently even this scene faded from his conscious vision, as, weary from the day's exertions, he fell into a sound sleep.



## CHAPTER XXV

### A WEARISOME JOURNEY

"I guess those box springs worked a spell on you."

Kelty stood in the doorway to the kitchen and addressed this remark to Norman, who sat up in bed, yawning and stretching.

"Thought I wouldn't wake you up," continued the outlaw. "Our time here's a good deal like a setting hen's — not worth very much."

"I see the storm is still with us," said Norman, with a glance out the window, where the fine, sifting snow was still falling and the wind swirling it into drifts against every point in the landscape that could serve as a lodging place.

"Oh, it's a stayer," agreed Kelty. "You may set the table as soon as you please. I've got breakfast nearly ready."

"I see you've been to the pond," said Norman, as he noted the freshly filled pails of water at the sink.

"Not quite so far as that," returned Kelty. "There's a good spring of water on the west slope of this ridge."

"You should have routed me out, and have let me done my share of the work," declared Norman, who was wondering at the consideration which had been



shown him by the outlaw, and his apparent disposition to be sociable.

"I knew you were no shirk, pal," returned Kelty, "but I didn't need you, so I thought I'd let you snooze it out as long as you would."

"He was afraid I might try to escape," reflected Norman; but he almost immediately dismissed the suspicion as scarcely consistent with the manner in which Kelty had used him.

Having completed his hasty toilet, Norman hastened to set the table, while Kelty warmed up some baked beans and fried a generous supply of venison.

This, with tea and pilot-bread, constituted the breakfast. When it was finished, and the dishes cleared away, Kelty started a fire in the big stone fireplace, and sat down before it to enjoy a long smoke. Norman sat upon the opposite side of the cheerful blaze in one of the big rockers. The mood of the outlaw had apparently changed. He seemed moody and taciturn. Presently he rose and picked up his snow-shoes.

"I'm going out a spell," he announced, abruptly. "If I leave you here, will you be here when I come back, or will you improve the opportunity to take French leave of me?"

"I certainly sha'n't go out in this storm unless you make me," returned Norman.

"I imagine I feel all the time about as the deer in the woods do in open time," declared Kelty. "Here I am for once in my life injuring no man. I am even



playing the good Samaritan, and yet society in general is after me, and my only safety is in concealment. I stand about the same show with my fellow man that would be accorded a bear or a bob-cat."

"A person's reputation is about what he makes it," suggested Norman.

"Undoubtedly," sneered Kelty. "I'm not posing as a saint, and I am willing to admit that most of the apostles had me skun a mile in the matter of character."

He pulled on a mackinaw over his sweater, pulled his toque well over his ears, and stalked out into the storm. Norman saw him pause for a moment at the foot of the piazza steps to put on his snow-shoes, and then strike off through the firs where the trail, which had attracted his attention the day before, and which had been obliterated by the storm, had formerly been.

For a moment the impulse was strong upon Norman to make his escape in spite of the storm; but the thought of his promise to Kelty restrained him. The outlaw had used him with unexpected kindness and had trusted him. He would not abuse his confidence. He busied himself putting the camp in order, and, having completed this task, took a copy of Longfellow's poems, which he had observed among the camp's limited supply of books — most of them paper-covered novels of doubtful value — and was soon absorbed in its pages. He had read but a short time, however, when the door was flung open, and Kelty entered, in a very evident state of excitement. His coarse features looked drawn



and cruel, and there was a hunted and anxious look in his eyes.

"You here?" he gasped, as his eye fell upon Norman.

"Certainly. I told you I should remain."

"Who's been here since I've been gone?"

"No one."

"Look here, boy," growled Kelty, with an ugly scowl, "don't try to deal me any dope. I won't stand for it. Tell me the truth."

"I have done so," returned Norman, with dignity. "I'm not accustomed to tell anything else."

"And you haven't seen anyone since I was gone," insisted Kelty, incredulously.

"Not a soul."

"And you're not in communication with the camp?"

"Certainly not."

The outlaw looked relieved.

"Don't get your back hair up, pal," he said. "I just got a bad jolt. Some one's been spying on us within the last half hour."

"What makes you think so?" demanded Norman, in a skeptical tone.

"I saw his track."

"Saw his track?" repeated Norman.

"Yes. It seemed to come out of the firs back of this camp. I'm satisfied that they were fresh tracks, or, otherwise, the snow would have covered them."

"I think you must be mistaken," declared Norman.



"No," asserted Kelty, doggedly. "There was no doubt about it. Someone wearing long, narrow snowshoes has been spying on us, and he can't be very far away at this minute."

He passed quickly to the corner of the room, and picked up the Winchester rifle he had stolen from Billy Eustace. Seating himself in a chair he proceeded to fill the magazine with cartridges which he took from his mackinaw pocket. As they dropped into place with a cold, metallic click, Norman could not restrain a shudder of apprehension. He realized that Kelty was in a desperate mood, and was not a man to be trifled with.

Having loaded his rifle Kelty stepped about from window to window taking a careful survey of the outlook on every side of the camp. So close to it, however, were the fir-trees, and so thick was their growth that his field of vision was, necessarily, a limited one.

"A spy could hide almost under our windows!" he exclaimed, in disgust, as he completed his observations. He passed out into the kitchen, from which he returned presently with a leather haversack, and a grain bag, both of which were evidently well filled.

"Come," he said, gruffly. "Put on your things."

"What for?" asked Norman.

"We're going away."

"Where?"

"That's my business," returned Kelty, curtly. "Do as I tell you, and be quick about it."



Recognizing both the folly and the futility of resistance, Norman promptly obeyed the command of the outlaw — swinging the bag over his back by means of a rope tied to its ends, and which extended over his left shoulder and across his chest. Kelty took the haversack, which was obviously heavier than the bag, and adjusted it upon his back by means of its shoulder-straps. Norman carried also an axe, while Kelty took along the Winchester rifle. Thus equipped they ventured out into the storm.

The cold wind sent a shiver through Norman's frame which did not escape the attention of the outlaw.

"This isn't just the kind of a day that would be selected for a Sunday-school picnic," he said, as they paused at the foot of the piazza steps to put on their snow-shoes. "The storm isn't nearly as bad, though, as it was last night," he added.

"I can stand it if you can," returned Norman.

Kelty started out at a swinging pace to the left of the camp. The strong winds had packed the snow into hard drifts, over which they made rapid progress on their snow-shoes.

They followed along to the place where the point of land on which the camp stood dipped abruptly to the shore of the pond, and then, turning to the left, bore away on the higher ground into the deep woods. For nearly an hour they swung along without a word. Presently, near the top of a ridge, Kelty turned sharply about.



"Stop here," he said, briefly.

Norman waited a moment, while the outlaw retraced his steps a short distance, stopping now and then to listen intently. Evidently reassured, he turned and came quickly back to where Norman stood.

"It was only a pipe dream," he said.

"What was a pipe dream?" demanded Norman.

"Why, I thought someone was following us."

"I haven't heard anyone," declared Norman.

"No. I guess I've had my pains for my trouble," rejoined Kelty. "We'll push on again. How's your wind?"

"It would be better if I knew where we were going," said Norman.

"Shut up! Not another word about that," snapped Kelty, angrily. "I've let you understand that if you keep your mouth shut, and do as I say, no harm will come to you, and that's enough. Come on."

They struck out again through the snow-clad woods at a brisk gait. The wind blew gusts of snow in their faces, and rattled it down upon their heads and shoulders. Several times it filled the space on the back of the neck between Norman's toque and the upturned collar of his teamster's reefer, causing him no little discomfort; but he did not complain.

It was well into the afternoon before Kelty halted in the lee of a spruce-grown ridge, from the foot of which a spring of clear water bubbled forth in defiance of the winter's cold.



"We'll have to eat a cold lunch," declared the outlaw, as he slipped his haversack from his shoulders and laid it upon the snow. "I don't care to kindle a fire at this time."

He opened his haversack and took from it a dipper and a big handful of pilot-bread.

"This will be a stomach-stayer for us," he announced, as he divided it with Norman. "To-night we'll build a fire, and have a more substantial layout."

The meagre repast was soon completed, and washed down with water from the spring, after which the long tramp was resumed.

As the afternoon wore away, the pace at which they were going began to tell upon Norman. His legs and back ached from weariness, while the axe and bag he carried, which had seemed fairly light in the morning, appeared to acquire additional weight with every step.

Finally, unable to keep up the pace, he fell behind.

A moment later the outlaw turned and came back to him with scowling face.

"Trying to give me the slip, are you?" he demanded, wrathfully.

"No," replied Norman, doggedly. "I simply can't stand your gait. I'm no packhorse."

"We're coming to a camp pretty soon," explained Kelty, in a milder tone. "I want to make it before dark if I can."

"Go on," said Norman.

The journey was resumed at a somewhat slower



pace. In a short time they came to a small log camp, on the edge of what at first seemed to be a big, snow-covered plain, but which Norman perceived to be a large lake, whose frozen surface bore a heavy weight of snow.

He gazed at it intently, for somehow it seemed to have a familiar look.

His inspection seemed to irritate Kelty. He scowled, and threw open the camp door.

"Go inside," he growled.

The tone of this order stung Norman to the quick. While he had fully appreciated the importance of avoiding, if possible, any trouble with Kelty, whom he knew to be a man capable, under passion, of the basest crimes, his temper flashed out resentfully at being ordered about like a dog.

"Look here, Kelty," he said, sharply. "I've done about everything you've asked me to since we met; but I'm no yellow cur to be ordered about in that tone of voice."

"Don't you put on any airs with me," retorted the outlaw. "I didn't send you any invitation to come to me. I gave you an opportunity to go last night; but you wouldn't take it."

"I told you it would have been suicide," said Norman.

"It certainly would," agreed the outlaw, "so I kept you, and took good care of you. I saved your life."

He looked at Norman with wrinkled brows.



"Remember that!" he said, in a tone that was meant to be impressive. "I saved your life."

Norman, whose anger had cooled somewhat, forbore to reply.

The camp they had entered was small and dingy. It was made of unpeeled logs, and had a roof of cedar splits. It was evidently far from tight, for the fine snow under the driving force of the storm had sifted through it in a dozen different places, and lay piled in little heaps upon the hewn logs that constituted the floor. Two rough bunks, one above the other, stood in the further corner from the door, while a single-sash window in the back end supplied all the light that did not find its way within through the loose chinking and the gaping roof. Taken altogether it was a far from inviting structure.

"Not quite so gorgeous as Solstein's, eh?" said Kelty, as Norman lay down his bag and axe beside the rusty stove that stood in the center of the room.

"Not quite," admitted Norman.

"Well, it's a palace 'side of what it was when I first discovered it. Took me the best part of a Sunday to clean it out. Notice where that chinking changes?"

"Yes."

"Well, I did that with a big bunch of oakum I brought from Solstein's. Before that there were places where the moss had fallen out big enough for a cat to crawl through."

Kelty threw open the stove door and gave a grunt



of satisfaction. "All ready to light, just as I left it," he said. "I was afraid some hobo might have come along and touched it off."

He lighted the birch bark that lay in front of the door with a match, and a moment later a genial glow of heat was diffusing itself through the cold room from the fire that roared up the rusty pipe from the old stove.

The outlaw rummaged about a moment in his haversack and produced a candle.

"Found a whole dozen of these at the other camp," he announced. "There's nothing small or mean about old Solstein, when he's providing for himself."

He lit the candle, and stuck it into a hole which had been bored at a sharp vertical angle in one of the logs of the camp.

"That's my own invention," he explained. "Did it the last time I was here with an old auger I found. I'm not much in favor of light; but I don't think we're taking any very long chances to-night."

"I don't imagine there is anyone else who is fool enough to be out in this storm," agreed Norman, glumly.

"Still a bit wamble-cropped, are you?" asked the outlaw, sneeringly. "You'll feel better when you get something to eat. Here's our deacon seat," he added, drawing a rude bench beside the stove. "Let's sit down and thaw out."

Norman promptly accepted the outlaw's invitation.

"Pumped out?" asked Kelty, as he drew his knife



and plug of tobacco from his pocket, and leisurely filled his pipe.

"No," replied Norman. "I could go a little further if I had to; but I shouldn't care to."

Kelty lit his pipe and drew a few long, meditative whiffs, with his eyes intently fixed on Norman.

"Do you know, pal," he said, in a curious tone, "I never quite understood how you came down here, into this God-forsaken place."

"I thought I made that clear to you once," returned Norman. "My father thought the change would be good for me."

"And I thought it might be healthy for me," said Kelty, with a thin chuckle. "I wasn't standing very much on ceremony about that time."

"How did you get away?" asked Norman.

"It was a mighty close squeeze; but I did it," returned the outlaw. "You see when I found myself on that back street I lost no time in skipping down a steep hill to the right. About half-way down I crossed over and doged down a street to the left. For once luck was with me. A fire was on and a crowd was chasing it up. I mixed in with the push, and the first chance I got I slipped away into a basement. There was a coal-bin in one end of it, made with a brick partition that ran from side to side and extended nearly to the ceiling. By good fortune it was nearly empty. The door was securely locked; but I was lucky enough to find an empty kerosene barrel near by. I placed it



in one corner, where it would be the least likely to attract attention, and succeeded in climbing into the coal-bin. It was pretty nearly full, and I lost no time in burrowing into the pile close up against the partition. I hadn't been there but a few minutes when two cops came in and searched the basement. One of them even stood up on the barrel and looked inside of the coal-bin. His elevation, however, just about brought his face even with the top of the partition. I lay flattened out against the wall on the inside right opposite to him, not daring to breathe, and he overshoot me; he took a look into the back part of the bin, and reported it empty. It was a mighty close shave.

"I sneaked out after dark and made my way to the home of a cousin of mine, who runs an employment agency. He was just fitting out a gang of men for an agency in Bangor. So he rigged me up and sent me along with them. I suppose the cops were watching for me; but it never occurred to them to look for me in that kind of a crowd. It wasn't my first experience in a logging-camp — and that's how I happened to turn up at Camp 4."

Kelty paused and gave Norman a searching look. "It's supper-time," he said. "There's a spring a few steps from here. If I should take that pail on the shelf by the door and fill it with water, would you try and skip out on me?"

"No," returned Norman, promptly. "I've done about all the skipping I care to for one day."



"I'll take your word for it," returned Kelty, and, picking up the pail, he left the camp, bringing it back shortly after full of clear, cold spring water.

A little later Norman and the outlaw enjoyed a hearty meal on pilot-bread and venison steak, which they broiled over some live coals pulled forward onto the stove-hearth.

After supper Kelty lit his pipe again and smoked in moody silence. Norman, too, was busy with his own reflections and had no desire to engage in conversation.

Presently the outlaw rose and knocked the ashes from his pipe against the stove cover.

"Which bunk do you want?" he asked.

"It makes no difference to me," returned Norman.

"Well, take the lower one if you like. Those two old blankets are all we have and I'll divide with you. I guess there's wood enough in that pile by the door to keep the fire going if we don't sleep too soundly."



## CHAPTER XXVI

### AN UNSUCCESSFUL BREAK FOR LIBERTY

After the long, regular breathing of Kelty indicated that he was fast asleep, Norman still lay awake in his bunk. The storm had gone down, and he felt that the time was at hand when he must part company with the outlaw.

As he thought over the surroundings of their present camp, its location dawned upon him like a flash of inspiration. They were upon the shore of Quadrate Lake! Where else within the territory they had traversed was there another so large a body of water? Surely the black spruce point which he had seen that afternoon, on the opposite side of the lake, was the one that had attracted his attention when he drove with Vede Pelotte and Mr. Collins across the upper bay on his way to Camp 4. He remembered, too, of having heard Jim Benner speak of a gummer's camp nine miles down the lake shore, and this, he felt convinced, was it. A mile up the lake he would strike the tote-road of the oat teams, which followed the shore from that point, and which, although more or less drifted, would afford him comparatively easy walking on his snow-shoes to the camp.



He realized the danger he would encounter in attempting to escape from Kelty, who had taken the precaution to carry his rifle to bed with him, and who also wore a revolver at his belt. Norman knew that both of these weapons were loaded, and ready for instant use. If the outlaw should discover him in the act of stealing away he felt that he would be absolutely at his mercy. He felt convinced that, under the circumstances, his position would be perilous in the extreme.

The lack of blankets had given him a good excuse for retaining his clothing, and he had taken the precaution to leave his leggings and moccasins within easy reach of his bunk.

It was evident that Kelty was not without his suspicions, for he had retired for the night fully dressed.

Very cautiously Norman reached out and secured his footwear, which he had removed for the sole purpose of dispelling, so far as possible, any doubts the outlaw might entertain regarding his intentions. Slowly and carefully, pausing now and then to listen to the deep breathing of his companion, Norman dressed his feet in readiness for the tramp he had planned.

Soon after he crept silently from his bunk, and started for the door. He had gone but a few steps, however, before Kelty sat up abruptly in his bed and spoke to him.

"What you doing?" he demanded, distrustfully.



"Fixing the fire," responded Norman, promptly, as he swung open the stove door, and reached for a stick of wood.

"All right! Fill her up," responded the outlaw.

Norman stuffed the rusty stove with what wood it would hold, and went back to his bunk. In a short time he simulated the long, regular breathing of sleep, for he felt convinced that the outlaw was awake, and listening to him.

It was several hours later when he again stole from the bunk, but Kelty again challenged him before he got half way across the room.

"Cold again?" he asked.

"Beginning to be," returned Norman, laconically, and once more he filled up the stove with wood and returned to his bunk.

"Your blood must be thinner than mine. I'm perfectly comfortable," commented the outlaw, drowsily.

"Shouldn't wonder if it was," returned Norman, with a yawn.

Again Norman had been intercepted in carrying out his plan of escape, and his heart sank with the conviction that it would not be possible for him to elude Kelty's vigilance. But fortune favored him. The attempt to watch Norman was telling on the outlaw, and in the early morning hours he fell into a sleep so sound that his snoring woke Norman, who had himself fallen into a troubled doze.

This time Norman reached the front of the camp



without interruption and carefully opening the door slipped out into the woods. It was but a moment's work for him to adjust his snow-shoes and strike with rapid stride up the lake. A few belated stars glittered coldly in the clearing sky, and a crescent moon shone dully above a bank of clouds, affording him sufficient light to hold his course, by following the dark outline of the trees that fringed the shore.

A sense of exhilaration came over him in the thought that he was free! and he pushed forward with a vigorous swing that took no thought of physical weariness. For half an hour he pushed ahead and then, turning sharply to the left, he made his way up the bank and through a thick spruce growth. He could scarcely repress an exclamation of triumph when he emerged from it, and came suddenly into the oat road. The storm had filled it with drifts, but its way was still visible as it wound its course among the tall trees. Cheered by the consciousness that he was on the right track, Norman pushed forward at a brisk pace. He had gone but a short distance when a dark form stepped suddenly out from behind a big spruce and confronted him.

"Stop right where you are," came in Kelty's familiar voice. "If you go any further I'll shoot you in your tracks."

Norman stopped abruptly. In the dim light he was conscious that the outlaw was covering him with his rifle.



"You're a sneak! a skulking sneak!" hissed Kelty, in a voice that trembled with passion. "You haven't brains enough to know when you're well treated."

"I don't know what reason I've given you to say that," returned Norman, coolly.

"Here I've used you like a white man," continued the outlaw, wrathfully. "Saved your life by giving you shelter from the storm, and you repay me by creeping away in the night to betray me at the camp. You'd done it, too, if you'd known enough to have struck across to the oat road, as I did, instead of following the irregularities of the lake shore."

"I went into your camp at Deer Trail Pond on your orders," retorted Norman, with spirit.

"Didn't I open the door and tell you that you might go again?" demanded Kelty.

"Yes — when it was dark and the storm was raging. When it would have meant suicide for me to go."

"Shut up!" said the outlaw, roughly. "I won't waste any breath on you. Turn about there and go the other way. Move!" he growled, as Norman hesitated.

"I don't know who made me your servant," said Norman, hotly.

"It makes no difference," returned Kelty. "I told you to shut up. I'm through fooling with you."

Norman hesitated. A sharp report rang out on the air, and a rifle bullet went whizzing by his ear.

"That was only a whisper," declared Kelty, with



an oath. "The next one, let me tell you, will drink blood."

Without a word Norman turned and started dejectedly back towards the gummer's camp. He recognized the folly of resisting Kelty, although he told himself, in the bitterness of his despair, that had he been possessed of any kind of a firearm he would have fought him then and there to a finish.

"I told you squarely that if you did as I told you no harm should come to you," said Kelty, savagely, as they strode along, "but now you may as well understand that I sha'n't feel so tender of you hereafter. You've been a spy all the time, and you were hiking back to Camp 4 to put the pack on my trail."

"If I'd wanted to do that I've surely had opportunity enough in the past two months," said Norman.

"You've sung that song before," returned Kelty. "What were you going back for, then?"

"Because that's where I belong — because I see no reason why I should be your packhorse."

"That won't wash," declared Kelty, incredulously. "I've taken your full measure. Packhorse!" he snorted, wrathfully, "and me lugging three-fourths of the load! I'll give you a load to-day that'll be a load, and you'll carry it, too, if you're alive."

Norman made no response. He saw that Kelty was highly overwrought, and still breathing hard from the race he had run in cutting off his escape. Under the circumstances, he felt that it would not be wise to say



anything that would serve to further infuriate him. He knew that, in the frenzy of passion, there was no crime that the outlaw would hesitate to commit.

As they neared the gummer's camp the first glimmer of dawn showed through the trees, and drove the shadows back from the lake shore. This seemed to arouse Kelty to a fresh outburst of wrath.

"You young skunk, you've been bound to bring me into the open," he panted. "I'm a good mind to lay you out right here. You deserve it, you dirty little squealer. We should have been gone an hour ago."

He paused a moment and then belched forth a torrent of blasphemous abuse, such as Norman had never before heard from human lips. Oath followed oath in rapid succession, and Norman, who abhorred profanity in all its forms, could not restrain a shudder. The suspicion flashed upon him that this outburst might really be the raging rant of a maniac.

There was a wild glare in Kelty's eyes that seemed to confirm the thought.

"Go in! in with you!" he shouted, as Norman hesitated a moment at the door of the gummer's camp. "Go, before I lose control of myself, and shoot you."

Norman opened the camp door and stepped within. The fire had burned low, and the room felt damp and chilly. It was evident that Kelty, in his hasty departure, had not stopped to put any wood in the stove.

"Sit down," ordered the outlaw, as he closed the door behind him.





NORMAN TURNED AND STARTED DEJECTEDLY BACK. — *Page 349.*







Norman seated himself a little wearily upon the rough bench beside the stove.

"You don't deserve any breakfast," continued Kelty, with scowling brows.

"I don't care for any," returned Norman, despondingly.

"Doing the grand martyr act, eh?" sneered Kelty. "Look-a-here," he added, with rising wrath, holding his rifle with one hand, and shaking his fist in Norman's face with the other. "If you're wise you won't try any frills on me. You can't become a martyr; but it will be mighty easy for you to become a dead dog."

Norman rose to his feet, his face pale with passionate resentment. "If you want to shoot me," he said, hotly, "why don't you do it? It's cowardly to threaten an unarmed man. Give me either of your weapons and I'll take my chances with you."

"Ho! Ho! Crow, little bantam, crow!" laughed Kelty, derisively. "Want to fight a duel — do you? Well, perhaps, I'll accommodate you later; but not now."

He paused, and going to his haversack produced two discs of pilot-bread.

"Here," he said, "take these. There's a little water in that old pail. It's been there over night, but you'll have to make it do. I sha'n't dare to trust you out of my sight now that you've played me this dirty trick."

"I haven't broken my word to you yet," returned Norman.



"I haven't given you any very good chance," said Kelty, sneeringly.

He busied himself for a time packing up his haversack.

"You'll carry this to-day," he announced, when he had completed the task.

Norman picked up the haversack, and laid it down.

"I can't handle that," he said.

"Why not?" demanded Kelty.

"It's too heavy, and you know it."

"Put that on," commanded the outlaw. "I reckon if I could carry it you can."

"You've loaded it heavier than you did yesterday," rejoined Norman. "Besides, you're a good deal older and stronger than I am."

Kelty took a step forward, his eyes blazing wrathfully.

"So you mean to defy me!" he roared.

"I mean that I sha'n't try to do the impossible," responded Norman, firmly.

Kelty stood glowering at him a moment in silent rage.

"Of all the lion-hearted nerve! of all the crust — of all the tin-plate audacity and impudence I've ever ran up against, this takes the cake," he gasped. "It's the limit."

He passed to the front of the camp and picked up a dry birch stick that leaned against the wall by the door.



"I don't know just how this happened to be here," he declared, "but it comes in mighty handy about this time."

"What are you going to do with that?" demanded Norman, in alarm.

Kelty gave vent to a low, ominous laugh.

"I thought I'd fetch you back to an interest in life. Waking up, are you?" he sneered. "You'll feel a good deal stronger than you do now when I'm through with you."

Norman's face was pale, but he looked the outlaw squarely in the eye.

"Don't you hit me with that," he said, warningly.

"Defying me, are you?" hissed the outlaw.

"No; but don't you dare to hit me."

There was something in Norman's tone that caused Kelty to pause and glance apprehensively at the rifle which he had leaned against the wall on the opposite side of the camp. Evidently satisfied that this weapon was well beyond Norman's reach, he stepped forward with tight-set lips.

"Bluff don't go," he growled, hoarsely.

He swung the stick over his shoulder and aimed a vicious blow at Norman; but so quickly did his intended victim side-step that it fell with a resounding whack across the deacon seat.

A savage oath burst from Kelty's lips.

"Doing the weasel act — are you?" he roared.

Again he raised the stick, but paused abruptly.



A cry of joy broke from Norman's lips. The camp door had been pulled swiftly open, and a form lithe as a panther's had bounded into the camp.

"Throwum up hands!" commanded a deep, guttural voice.

Kelty turned with livid face and dropping jaw to look into the muzzle of a Winchester rifle in the hands of Sol Soc.

The beady eyes of the Indian burned with an ominous light.

"Putum up hands," he repeated, in cold, impassive tones, and with a muttered oath, Kelty hastened to obey.



## CHAPTER XXVII

### SOL SOC MEETS WITH A SURPRISE

When Norman failed to return from his tramp in the woods Sunday night, the men of Camp 4 were disturbed and worried.

They began to appreciate for the first time, how much this cheerful, modest boy, who had frequently played the banjo for them of an evening, had contributed to their pleasures during the long winter evenings. They were the more attached to him from the fact that they entertained a feeling, unexpressed but none the less strong, that they had been guilty of doing him a grave injustice. In their rough way, with the latent spirit of fair play that is characteristic of woodsmen, they had endeavored to atone for their error by a special show of friendliness. As a result, Norman had passed considerably more of his time after supper in the men's camp, since the brutal assault on Benner and the flight of Kelty had brought about the reaction in his favor.

The announcement of Fred Warner, therefore, that, with a severe storm coming on and darkness approaching, Norman had failed to put in an appearance, was the occasion of no little anxiety to them.



Mr. Collins and Harry McMurray, who had arrived at the camp the night before, were besieged with volunteers who offered their services for the search. Soon men were out in all directions, shouting, firing guns, and ringing bells.

The occupants of the beaver house were at no pains to conceal their alarm and apprehension. One and all joined in the search. Two hours later, chilled with the storm which was now sweeping in a gale through the woods, the men, wearied and depressed by their fruitless efforts, were back again at the camp.

In the beaver house Mr. Collins and the two bosses were nervously considering the situation. Sol Soc, Fred Warner, Pete Bedotte, Tapley, and Peters — all of whom had been out in the woods — were also present, and visibly dejected.

"It's no use, Nate," said McMurray, slowly. "We can't do a thing to-night. I hope the boy isn't out in this storm; but if he is, God help him!"

Mr. Collins, who was pacing nervously up and down the narrow space in the center of the room, and whose face looked pinched and drawn, paused abruptly.

"There's no possible chance of trailing him, is there, Sol?" he said, addressing the Indian.

"No. Me try. No use. Snow blow; cover track."

"Did he take matches, Fred?"

"Yes. He had a water-tight holder full of them."

"He also had my little belt-axe with him," added Eustace.



"Ba golly! dat ban good," said Pete Bedotte.

"I reckon he's got in the lee o' some ridge and built a lean-to," said Tapley, reassuringly. "With thet an' a good fire he'd weather this, all right."

"Do you suppose he'd know how to build such a camp?" asked the scaler, doubtfully.

"I think he would," returned Fred. "He's seen several of them. He asked me once what I would do if I should be caught out in the woods in a storm, and I told him."

"That's encouraging," said the scaler. "We might as well hope for the best. He's an intelligent boy and will, I think, be cool enough to make the best of the situation."

"No one can tell what any one will do when they're lost in the woods," said McMurray, doubtfully. "When they get rattled they usually do the most foolish things possible."

"Have you any idea where he went, Fred?" asked the scaler.

"No. One of the men saw him going up the wood-road toward Peltier's yard. I had no doubt but what he would be back in an hour or two."

"Were you ever up with him on that road?"

"Yes. I went up there with him the first Sunday he was here. We took an east course from the road and snow-shoed through to Deer Trail Pond."

The face of the scaler lighted up with a new hope.

"Perhaps that's where he went to-day," he said.



"If the storm caught him there, he's probably all right," declared McMurray. "He could put up at Solstein's sporting-camp. He knew it was there, did he?"

"Yes," returned Fred. "We took dinner once with Baptiste Groder and Pat Farrow on the ice in plain sight of it."

"I think you'd better start for there the first thing in the morning, Sol," said McMurray. "The rest of us, at least those of us who know the woods well enough to work to advantage, will keep up the hunt nearer the camp as soon as it is light enough to move."

"Good," said the Indian; and, turning, he stalked out of the beaver house.

The following morning, before sunrise, the tall fellow was making his way on snow-shoes over the drifted road that led to Peltier's yard. On his back he carried two heavy blankets in a tight roll, inside of which were provisions enough to last him two days. Over his shoulder he carried a Winchester rifle. For a time he kept to the road, pushing forward at a long, easy stride, in spite of the storm that was howling through the forest, and which beat against his face, pelting him remorselessly with puffs of snow.

Just as the sun was shooting its first shafts of light across the tree-tops, he turned abruptly to the right and struck off through the deep woods. Here the big trees, standing close together and bending before the gale, afforded him more shelter than he had enjoyed in the



open roadway. Without a moment's pause the tall Indian kept on his way, heading his course for the Solstein camp on the shore of Deer Trail Pond, in an almost direct line.

It was evident that the compass played no part in Sol's woodcraft. He went on with the confidence and accuracy of his race, to whom the ability to traverse the big woods with an almost unerring sense of direction seems to be an inheritance from their more savage ancestry.

Once the Indian paused, as his keen eye detected a partridge eating the buds on a birch-top. His rifle came almost involuntarily to his shoulder; but he promptly lowered it and, with a regretful glance at the game he had foregone, continued on his way.

The wood was full of weird voices as the wind swept imperiously and boisterously through the forest aisles; and this swarthy-faced man, who moved among them with native and unconscious grace, seemed to recognize them all.

Presently he paused abruptly, while a near-by tree, unable to withstand the assaults of the wind, went crashing down amid the undergrowth, with a quick, sharp intonation, like the crack of a rifle many times intensified. The Indian scarcely noticed it. With a quick glance at the sky, he resumed his tramp and pushed forward with the same rapid, swinging stride as before.

At length he came down the sharp incline of a ridge



and looked, through a fringe of cedars, upon the cold surface of Deer Trail Pond. For a moment he glanced toward the point of the land upon which stood the camp of Isaac Solstein. It was partially visible through the fir-trees that stood about it; and a low grunt of satisfaction broke from the Indian, as he noted the column of smoke that curled from its big stone chimney.

For a short time he stood, watching and listening, every sense alert to any unusual sound; but the howling of the storm would have drowned out any other noise had there been one, while the swirling clouds of snow made it difficult, save in the brief periods of lull, to see with distinctness any distance ahead.

Evidently satisfied that the conditions were favorable for a reconnoitre, the Indian moved forward in the direction of the sporting-camp. He stole cautiously to the rear of it, and concealed himself carefully behind a clump of young firs. Hardly had he reached this point of vantage, before his quick ear detected the sound of snow-shoes pounding along the floor of the front piazza; and the man whom he had known as Pat Farrow stepped upon the drifts with a water-pail on his arm.

It was evident that the outlaw was ill at ease. He paused as he left the camp, and glanced suspiciously around him. The Indian stood as rigid as a statue, tightly gripping his rifle and holding it before him in readiness for instant use; but his precautions were needless. His hiding-place was an excellent one, and,



screened as it was by the sifting snow, easily escaped the outlaw's attention.

Evidently satisfied that all was well, Kelty moved forward in the direction of the spring. The moment he was out of sight the Indian quickly made his way to the side of the camp, and looked through the window into the big sitting-room.

The sight which met his gaze nearly drove him from his accustomed stoicism. Sitting comfortably in a large rocking-chair before the cheerful blaze of a big open fire, was Norman Carver, apparently absorbed in the pages of a book he was reading.

With rapid strides the Indian beat a hasty retreat to his hiding-place. His swarthy and usually impassive face came nearer wearing a look of amazement than is often the case with the self-contained and stoical people of his race. He had expected, if he found Norman at all, to find him a helpless prisoner securely bound, and perhaps gagged; but here he was, seemingly a guest of honor, enjoying himself in apparently perfect freedom by the fire; while Farrow, the man with infamous record, the brutal assailant of Jim Benner, was lugging the water!

Swift and harrowing suspicions chased one another through the Indian's mind. Could it be, after all, that Norman was what the crew had suspected him to be? Could he indeed be the colleague and confederate of Farrow, who after assisting him in his thievery had gone to join him in the enjoyment of his plunder?



In vain the Indian tried to reconcile such a state of facts with all the estimates he had formed of Norman. No — no. There was evidently some mystery here, and, with the patience of his people, the Indian grimly determined to wait and unravel it.

From his post of observation he saw Kelty return from the spring, bearing his pail full of water. He passed out of sight in front of the house, and almost immediately reappeared. It was evident that he had paused only long enough to place his pail upon the piazza.

With quick, nervous steps he walked along beside the camp, and examined the snow-shoe track beside the window. In the lee of the building this track was still partially visible, but beyond that the sweep of the storm had wholly obliterated it.

It was evident that Kelty recognized the futility of undertaking to follow it. He was plainly disturbed by what he had seen. He stood erect and gazed about him with a look of apprehension. The Indian, with his rifle cocked and ready for use, was only a short distance from him; but the screen of boughs and the blinding storm effectually hid him. For a moment Kelty stood irresolute; and then, turning sharply, disappeared from view around the front of the camp.

Squatting upon his snow-shoes, the Indian stolidly awaited further developments.

In a short time his vigil was rewarded by the appearance of Kelty and Norman, fully equipped for a jour-



ney. Kelty led the way, with a rifle upon his shoulder; while Norman followed after, carrying an axe in addition to the burden upon his back.

Again the Indian was puzzled. Years of work in the woods had taught him to regard an axe as a very valuable weapon. Surely if Farrow were holding Norman under duress, he would not have permitted him to follow behind with such a formidable instrument of assault.

He silently watched them until they had passed from sight; and then, gliding from his place of concealment, he took their trail. To one less skilled in woodcraft this would have been no easy task. The driving storm effaced their tracks almost as soon as they were made; but the Indian was too much of an adept to be phazed by such difficulties. Little things that would have escaped the observation of most men — a broken twig, the scrape of a snow-shoe on the side of a tree, the absence of snow on the evergreen boughs they had brushed aside in passing, the noise they made occasionally in climbing over windfalls — things scarcely discernible and seemingly insignificant, were noted by him with wonderful keenness of perception. Again, when the wind momentarily died down he would come upon their tracks, large and well defined.

Once he stepped hastily behind a big hemlock as Kelty doubled back upon his tracks, only to resume his pursuit when the outlaw turned about.

So sharp was his sight and so keen his hearing, that



even the mourning wind and the driving snow could not shake his hold upon the situation, or render him insensible to any sight or sound that was foreign to the woods or out of harmony with Nature's solemn requiem. No hound could have followed the scent of a fox more unerringly than this swarthy son of the forest followed the course of Kelty and Norman.

It was well past the noon hour when he stood in a thicket of scrub spruces and watched the outlaw and his companion eat their frugal lunch. He had eaten nothing himself since early morning, but he gave no thought to it. He was accustomed to hardship and privation. He had work, important work, in hand. Somewhere Farrow and Norman must put up for the night. Then and not till then would he find time for eating.



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### A FRIEND IN NEED

All through the afternoon the tall Indian followed silently after the outlaw and Norman. As darkness approached the wind lost something of its fury.

"Ugh. Boy tired," he grunted, under his breath, as he noticed Norman's shorter and more irregular steps.

"Ugh. Gummer's camp!" he muttered again, as the lay of the land revealed to him in a flash of comprehension Kelty's intended destination. At the same time a look of satisfaction stole across his swarthy features, as he recollected an old lean-to in a little ravine not far from the lake shore. If Farrow's objective point was, indeed, as he suspected, the old gummer's hut, he would be able to camp in comparative comfort within easy distance of him.

Had it been otherwise it would not have daunted the Indian. He had spent too many nights in the Maine woods, in hastily improvised camps, to have any fear of the elements. He knew the secrets of the wilderness, and had tested its hospitality.

Later he dodged quickly behind two big spruces that grew close together; for he had come in sight of Nor-



man, who showed unmistakable signs of fatigue, and had lagged behind his companion.

Scarcely had he reached this point of observation before he saw the outlaw coming back. His features were contorted with very obvious anger, and he evidently spoke sharply to Norman, although the sound of their voices was smothered in a rising gust of wind and failed to reach even the keen ears of the Indian. He was satisfied, however, as to the nature of their conversation; and a glow of satisfaction came into his dark eyes with the conviction that Norman was, after all, a prisoner.

Later from a well-chosen point of observation Sol watched the outlaw and his companion enter the gummer's camp; and again he noted, with keen satisfaction, an evident interchange of angry words between the two.

He stood watching the camp for a time, and presently saw Farrow come out with an old, much battered water-pail and pass to the spring that bubbled up, in defiance of frost and snow, a short distance away. For a moment a wild impulse came over him to shoot the outlaw. He drew a bead upon him with his rifle and thought how easily he could end the existing situation then and there; but calmer considerations prevailed, and he dropped his weapon back into the hollow of his arm.

He saw Kelty return and enter the camp. For a time he maintained his position, watching the rude hut,



with every sense alert. The storm was still in progress, but much of its force was spent. The Indian was apparently insensible to its rigors. Night came on quickly. The tall trees threw lengthening shadows on the snow, and soon the little clearing was shrouded in darkness. Straggling beams from the candle found their way out-of-doors through small holes in the loose chinking, and sent slender shafts of light into the darkness.

With the stealth and silence of a cat, the Indian stole from his place of concealment and approached the camp, pausing now and then to listen. Presently he reached it and sank upon his knees beside a spot where a streamer of light proclaimed a hole in the chinking. Applying his eye to this small opening, he saw the outlaw and Norman seated side by side before the fire in apparent sociability. The outlaw, between the puffs of his pipe, was telling the story of what appeared to be a former adventure of his, and his companion was following his narrative with very evident interest.

The Indian arose carefully and withdrew into the woods as silently as he had come. His plans were made. Evidently Norman was not in condition at that time to take the long tramp back to camp, and the accommodations he could furnish him would not compare with those afforded by the gummer's camp. It was, obviously, the best thing to let matters rest as they were for the night, and seize the first favorable opportunity in the morning to close in upon the outlaw.



With this conclusion the Indian made his way back into the woods. It was pitchy dark, but the fury of the storm had appreciably subsided. With wonderful skill the Indian picked his way unhesitatingly among the tall trees, and presently snow-shoed down the steep bank of a ravine through which a brook made its way into the lake.

The Indian came to a stop at a point where two massive boulders jutted from the bank. The space between them had been enlarged by digging back into the hard clay, and a roof had been formed by extending poles from one boulder to the other and covering them in with fir boughs. This roof was now piled high with drifted snow. It was a natural camp of the lean-to order, admirably situated to escape the fury of the winter storms.

The Indian slowly drew a pair of heavy woolen mittens, which he had disdained to wear during the day, from the pocket of his mackinaw, and put them upon his hands. Thus fortified, he leaned his rifle against one of the boulders, and proceeded to brush the snow from the mouth of the camp. As he went deeper into the artificial cavern there was less of it, and in the far end the fir boughs upon the floor were scarcely covered. A grunt of satisfaction came from the Indian as he found, close against the clay wall at the rear, a pile of dry wood and birch bark which had evidently been left there on some previous visit. Carrying part of this to the front of the camp, he soon had a cheerful fire



blazing before the opening. This done, he carefully picked up the fir boughs from the floor, shook them free from snow, and returned them to the same place.

From a near-by fir-tree he cut a number of fresh boughs and placed them upon top of the old ones. Then, unstrapping the blankets which he carried on his back, he spread one over the boughs, rolled himself tightly in the other, and lay down upon his primitive bed, with his feet toward the fire.

The wind was dying down, but still swept in fitful gusts through the forest, filling the sombre reaches with a myriad weird and mournful voices. To the Indian, however, they constituted a wild music in keeping with his nature; and, under its spell, he fell into a heavy slumber.

Several times during the night he woke, put fresh wood upon his waning fire, and while its cheerful blaze threw a circle of light into the darkness of the gully, rolled himself in his blanket again, and once more fell fast asleep.

Toward morning his fire burned low, but a few live coals were still buried in its smoldering embers. The Indian unrolled himself from his blanket, and with some birch bark was coaxing forth a new blaze, when he was startled by the report of a gun. He sprang quickly to his feet, seized his rifle which leaned against the boulder where he had left it when he first lay down to sleep, and stood with head bent forward at rigid attention. He was no longer the stolid, impassive



member of the camp crew. Every nerve was vibrant with expectancy, every faculty alert to catch any further sounds that might come to him. A terrible fear was upon him; had he made a mistake in waiting? Was this report, after all, the announcement of a tragedy? Had Kelty added a new horror to the long list of his offenses, by making away with Norman? The Indian's face paled under his native bronze at the mere thought. Hastily buckling on his snow-shoes, he stole forth into the dark woods above the gully, and made his way swiftly and silently toward the oat road that ran along the lake shore. He moved with a stealthy, gliding motion, avoiding as if by intuition all natural obstacles, and presently paused abruptly in the rear of a big hemlock that grew a few feet back from the oat road. His quick ear had detected the sound of voices, and he knew that they were coming in his direction.

He had scarcely gained this shelter when Kelty and Norman came along the road. The desperado, with angry oaths, was driving his prisoner before him. It was evident that he was in no enviable frame of mind.

"I'm a good mind to lay you out right here," came in Kelty's familiar tones. "You deserve it, you dirty little squealer!"

The listening Indian felt a thrill of exultation. He was no longer in doubt as to the relation which Norman bore to the desperado. The boy was a prisoner and was being held by force. He had attempted to escape, had been recaptured, and was being escorted



back to the old gummer's camp by the resentful Kelty, who was obviously in a high state of rage and excitement. Only the inherent caution of the Indian prevented him from indulging in a triumphant whoop.

A moment later his eyes blazed and his dark features were contracted with anger at the wild abuse which Kelty was heaping upon Norman. As the desperado passed him he drew a bead upon him with his rifle, while his finger fairly itched to pull the trigger. Never in all his venturesome and disreputable life had Kelty been in greater danger than he was at that moment. With a mighty effort the Indian stifled his wild impulse, and swung his rifle upon his shoulder. He moved silently along behind the screen of trees that bordered the oat road, keeping within hearing distance of Kelty and his prisoner.

Presently they came within sight of the gummer's camp, and the Indian heard Kelty peremptorily order his prisoner inside, and saw Norman obey. Gliding to his former post of observation at the side of the camp, Sol leaned his rifle against the rough logs and resumed his vigils. If Kelty had come out into the open at that time, it is probable that the Indian would have shot him promptly and without remorse; but the desperado was too busily engaged with his prisoner to think of leaving the camp. It was evident that he was in a revengeful frame of mind, and that Norman's condition, if he were forced to remain with him, would be decidedly dangerous and uncomfortable.



To the listening Indian the conversation, heated as it was, between Kelty and Norman, was a genuine pleasure. It fully established the groundless character of the suspicions he had entertained; showed clearly the relationship between the outlaw and his young companion; and carried the assurance that, whatever dark deeds might properly be charged to Kelty, Norman had been in nowise concerned in them.

Sol's grim mouth relaxed into something like a smile of satisfaction at Norman's spirited offer to meet Kelty upon even ground, if he could have the use of either one of the outlaw's weapons.

"Good boy! Gotum spunk!" he murmured, approvingly, under his breath. His dark face clouded ominously as he listened to the conversation between Kelty and Norman in regard to carrying the pack. It was evident that the coarse and brutal nature of the outlaw was asserting itself in his effort to retaliate upon his prisoner for attempting to escape.

Through the hole in the chinking between the camp logs the powerful form of Kelty was plainly visible to Sol Soc, and once or twice the impulse was strong upon the Indian to end the desperado's career there and then. He pulled a long dirk-knife from a leather sheath attached to his belt and ran his thumb reflectively along its keen edge. Then, with something like a sigh, he returned it again to the place from which he had taken it. Obviously the restraints of civilization were resting heavily upon his wild spirit.



The altercation within the camp grew louder and sharper. Norman had flatly refused to act as a pack-horse for Kelty in carrying the heavy load the desperado had prepared for his punishment.

It was evident that the boy was stubbornly determined in the matter, and the dark eyes of the Indian flashed with approval of the spirit he displayed. Unquestionably, matters inside the gummer's camp were rapidly approaching a crisis. It was easily to be seen that Kelty would not tamely submit to have his authority defied. A nature so brutal and tyrannical as his would hesitate at no outrage, or shrink from no crime in the accomplishment of his purposes.

The Indian, with the quick intuition of his race, divined the desperado's purpose as he strode across the camp floor to secure the stout stick which leaned against the wall by the door.

The time for action had arrived. Rising from his knees, Sol made his way with cat-like stealth to the front of the camp — a precaution that was wholly unnecessary, so busily occupied was Kelty in his attempt to coerce Norman. In front of the door the Indian, leaning his rifle against the camp, knelt first on one knee and then on the other, and removed his snow-shoes.

Through the rough cleated door of the camp the voices of Kelty and Norman were clearly audible.

"Bluff don't go!" Sol heard the desperado exclaim in tones tense with passion.



Almost immediately there came a resounding whack from inside the camp, followed by an oath from Kelty. With a quick movement the Indian reached forward and grasped his rifle. Had Kelty been less occupied he might have heard the sharp click of the hammer, as Sol brought it to a full cock; but he had allowed his wrathful resentment at Norman's show of independence to run away with his caution.

The Indian waited no longer. With a quick movement he pulled open the rude door, and sprang within the camp.



## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE PASSING OF CLOUTER KELTY

For a moment after Kelty had complied with his command to put up his hands, the Indian stood regarding him with an expression of mingled hatred and contempt on his usually imperturbable features.

Norman, overjoyed at Sol's opportune appearance, stood by the rude bench in front of the bunk, fairly dazed by the sudden and unexpected turn of events. He half expected to see Kelty disregard the Indian's rifle and close with his captor, but the desperado had no such intention. He knew that the first hostile movement on his part would mean instant death to himself. His face paled under the Indian's burning gaze; and, although he endeavored to meet the predicament in which he found himself with a show of bravado, it was evident that he was not a little surprised and cowed by the situation.

"What ye want o' me?" he demanded, in a surly tone.

"Takum his knife!" responded Sol, coolly, addressing Norman, who lost no time in relieving the desperado of the big hunting dirk which he carried at his belt.



"Take gun. Coverum," commanded the Indian.

Norman stepped to the side of the camp, and, picking up the Winchester rifle which Kelty had leaned against the wall, drew a bead on the outlaw.

With a grunt of satisfaction, the Indian lowered his rifle. Passing to the opposite side of the camp, he leaned it against the log wall, and drawing a piece of tarred rope from the pocket of his mackinaw, approached the outlaw, whose weasel-like eyes were glaring at Norman with wild and impotent rage.

"Putum hands behindum!" ordered Sol, as he came up beside Kelty.

The desperado made a motion as if to comply with this request, but suddenly threw his arms about the Indian and swung him in front of him.

"Ha! ha! why don't you shoot?" he called, jeeringly, to Norman, who dared not use his rifle for fear of hitting Sol. "One bullet will do for both of us."

The triumph of the outlaw, however, was short-lived. Although a powerful man, he was no match for the Indian. A brawny hand shot forward and closed upon his throat with a vise-like grip, a foot was thrown behind him, and he fell heavily to the floor with Sol on top of him. The Indian still retained his grip upon Kelty's throat, and it was evident that he was fast strangling the desperado, whose face grew black in his frantic efforts to breathe.

"Don't kill him, Sol!" cried Norman, alarmed at the situation.



"Me squeezeum out fight," responded the Indian, grimly. He relaxed his hold upon the throat of the outlaw, who lay weak and gasping upon the floor, and rolled him upon his face.

"Getum rope," he said, briefly.

Norman hastened to pick up the piece of tarred rope from the place where it had fallen in the brief struggle between the two men, and handed it to Sol. In a short time Kelty's hands were securely tied behind his back and he was thrown, still gasping, upon the bunk.

"Ugh! He t'ink he smart man!" grunted the Indian, resentfully. "Mebbe he don't be so smart nex' tam."

He paused and, fishing about in one of his mackinaw pockets, drew forth another and longer piece of the tarred rope.

"Tieum feet, too," he announced; and, with surprising rapidity, he proceeded to lash Kelty's legs securely together at the ankles.

"Come," he said, laconically, when this task was completed. "Go back to camp."

"What shall we do with this man?" demanded Norman, with a nod at Kelty.

"Leaveum. Tote-team come getum."

"Is Vede Pelotte at the camp?" persisted Norman. The Indian nodded.

"Can we get there before he leaves for Gamewood siding?"

"Yes. Roads all blocked," responded the Indian.



Without further words, Norman picked up his snow-shoes, took the rifle and knife which Kelty had carried, and followed the Indian out of the camp.

As they paused to put on their snow-shoes, Norman cast an anxious glance at the sky, in which black, angry-looking clouds were beginning to form again.

"I thought this storm was over," he said, "but it looks now as if we were in for another day of it."

"All wind. No snow," said the Indian.

"You don't think they'll break out the oat road if it storms, do you?"

"Mebbe not to-day. To-morrow."

"Do you think it would be right to leave a helpless man in that cold camp without fire or food all that time?" asked Norman.

"He all right!" responded the Indian, stolidly.

"It wouldn't be Christian, Sol," declared Norman, emphatically.

"He no Christian!" grunted Sol, with decision.

"No; but we ought to be," persisted Norman. "Besides, he used me better than that when I ran onto him in the storm. Wait a minute," and, turning about, he reentered the camp.

"You're not going to leave a fellow like this, are you?" said Kelty, in a wheedling tone, as Norman filled the big stove with chunks of wood.

"I've got to for a while," rejoined Norman; "but I'll see that relief is afforded you as soon as possible. Perhaps we'd better take you back to camp with us."



"No — no," responded Kelty, hastily; "don't do that. I should stand a slim show with that gang. Leave me here, and give them a chance to cool off a little before they see me."

"All right," returned Norman. "Perhaps that's best. They wouldn't be very cordial with you — especially if they knew how you tried to thrash me."

"I was mad. I went too far," said Kelty, in a tone of apology. "Don't lay that up against me, pal."

"I won't make it any harder than I can for you. It will be bad enough at best," responded Norman; and, turning about, he went outside the camp, where the Indian was impatiently waiting for him.

"Shall we take the rest of Kelty's things?" he asked, when he had donned his snow-shoes.

"His axe—his snow-shoes?" questioned Sol.

"Yes."

"No. Getum later."

Without further words Norman shouldered the rifle he carried, and followed the easy, swinging stride of the Indian along the open way that led from the gummer's camp to the drifted surface of the oat road.

The journey to Camp 4 was made almost in silence, the Indian, impassive and taciturn, leading the way at a brisk pace, with easy, springy gait and scarcely a glance at his companion. Only once he paused and looked sharply at Norman.

"Tired?" he asked, briefly.

"I'm all right. Go on," returned Norman.



"Good," grunted the Indian, approvingly; and, turning abruptly, he resumed his journey.

As they proceeded, the sky grew more and more overcast. Blustering gusts of wind dashed whirling eddies of snow in their faces and swept roistering away among the swaying trees. A leaden pall hung over the dark and sombre forest. Despite the exultation that had followed his escape from Kelty, Norman could not help feeling depressed. He was puzzled to account for the outlaw's treatment of him when he had first fallen into his hands at Solstein's sporting-camp. Certainly if Kelty had desired his death he could easily have brought it about by forcing him out into the storm that first night when he had given him food and shelter. If some transient mood, some softer motive, had influenced the desperado to this course, it was evident that it had passed away when he attempted to escape; and Norman shuddered to think what his fate might have been had not Sol Soc come to his rescue.

As they emerged from the oat road into the tote-road that led to the camp, a whirlwind of snow that was moving up toward the clearing from the lake suddenly resolved itself into a mammoth snow-plow held down by a crowd of men, and drawn by eight powerful horses. A quick shout of triumph went up from the men as they caught sight of the Indian and his companion. In a moment they gathered about them to shake hands with Norman and ply him with eager questions. Even "Noisy" Peters, the teamster, left



his horses standing in the road, and hastened to add his greeting.

"I'm mighty glad to see ye back," he said, wringing Norman's hand with a heartiness that made him wince. "We was afeared we'd lost ye."

"Thank you," responded Norman, gratefully.

Tears came into his eyes at the unaffected cordiality and sincerity of the welcome given him by these rough men whose good opinion he had come to value very highly; and it was with some difficulty that he controlled his voice sufficiently to answer the torrent of questions they rained upon him. In the fewest possible words he related his experiences from the time he left the beaver house Sunday afternoon until his rescue at the gummer's camp that morning by Sol Soc. Exclamations of surprise and rough expressions of sympathy greeted his narrative as he went along, and an involuntary cheer broke from the men when he related the manner in which Sol Soc had saved him from a thrashing at the hands of Kelty, and the vigorous manner in which the tall Indian had subdued and bound the desperado. There was an immediate demand for Sol, but he had taken advantage of the interest awakened by Norman's story, to slip away to the camp.

When Norman, escorted by the big snow-plow, came into the clearing, he was met by Fred Warner and Felix Lamarre, who greeted him most heartily.

"We've been awfully worried about you, old man," said Fred, as he clasped him warmly by the hand;



"but I felt sure you'd turn up all right. All the same," he added, "I shall sleep better, now that you're back again."

"Thank you, Fred," returned Norman, warmly. "I'm afraid I don't deserve your confidence. Watching Sol has convinced me that I haven't yet learned the first rudiments of woodcraft."

"His skill as a woodsman has certainly come into good play in your case," returned Fred, who had managed, with some difficulty, to gather a few of the facts regarding Norman's experience from the sphinx-like Sol.

Norman was about to reply when an exclamation of delight came from behind him, and he turned to meet the outstretched hands of Mr. Collins.

"I feel fifty years younger," declared the scaler, taking both of Norman's hands in his.

"And I feel at least forty years younger, myself," declared Harry McMurray, whose tall form towered behind the scaler. "It's lucky for Nate and me that the wind was just right to bring that cheer the boys gave you, to our ears. We'd started out to make a day of it; but when we heard that, we turned about and put for the camp, pretty well satisfied in our own minds that you'd turned up safe and sound."

"You ban had some breakfas'?" interposed Felix Lamarre, making his reappearance from the dingle. "Sol Soc ban eat so moche I mos' 'fraid he bus' heemse'f."



"No," admitted Norman, with a laugh; "I've been so glad to get back again that I forgot all about my not having had any breakfast."

"Go along in and fill up," said the scaler. "Harry and I will come in and hear your story between the mouthfuls."

"Put up your horses, boys," said McMurray to the men. "It's not a mite of use trying to break out until this storm is over. The snow fills right back into the road behind you. It's a good deal like trying to shovel a path through a binful of oats. Ah! here comes Billy," he added, in a tone of relief, as the camp boss came in view round the turn at the logging-road and snow-shoed down the short cut to the hovels.

"Thank God!" ejaculated Eustace with fervor, as he caught sight of Norman. "I'd almost given up hope of ever seeing you again," he added, as he took Norman's hand in a hearty clasp.

"I'm like a bad penny. I always return," said Norman lightly, although he was more touched by this expression of friendly interest on the part of Eustace than he would have cared to show.

"Tell you what, boys," said McMurray, briskly; "let's all go into the men's camp and let Norman eat his breakfast in peace. When he's through he can come in there and tell his story where we can all hear it."

This plan met with instant and hearty approval. Norman went into the cook's camp, where Felix had



an appetizing breakfast awaiting him. In his enthusiasm he had even opened a pail of raspberry jam, which he had kept jealously in store for some special occasion. This delicate attention did not escape Norman's observation, but when he ventured to thank the smiling Felix for it that worthy made light of it.

"Ba Joe! Dat not'ing 't all, Mesieu Carvarre," he said. "Not'ing was ban too good wit' you on dees camp."

Across the table Sol Soc was putting away, in solemn silence, the last vestiges of a prodigious breakfast. When he had finished he rose without a word and stalked away to the men's camp across the dingle, leaving Norman alone with Fred Warner and the cook.

Shortly after, Norman, seated on the deacon seat before the roaring fire in the men's camp, related in detail to Mr. Collins, McMurray, Eustace, and the members of the crew, all the experiences he had undergone during the time he had been absent from Camp 4. So interesting was the story he had to tell, that even Felix Lamarre and Fred Warner left their work to listen to it. From the comments of the men it was evident that Kelty had been wise in not desiring to return to them under the circumstances.

"Looks to me as if you left Kelty in rather a tight fix," said the scaler. "It's a bad sort of day for a man to be lying bound and helpless in a log hovel. What if it should catch afire or the wind blow the door open?"



"Ugh! Bad man!" grunted Sol Soc, as if the mere statement of this fact settled the whole question.

"I'll admit all that, Sol," responded the scaler; "but still he has some rights we are bound to respect, and certainly we would not wish to leave him long alone in his present predicament. I reckon I'll take a run down to the gummer's camp and have a look at him."

"And I'll go along with you," added Harry McMurray. "Perhaps we'd better take three or four blankets, and have Felix put us up a lunch. We may want to stay all night."

In a short time these preparations were completed; and the scaler and McMurray, arrayed in their warmest clothes and wearing snow-shoes, took their way down the drifted tote-road that led from the camp, and were speedily lost from sight in the eddying snow.

Norman remained with Eustace and the men in the big camp, and was obliged to go over again and again with them the various features of his experience with Kelty.

Towards noon the wind died down, and the sun broke through the thinning clouds, now floating away beyond the horizon.

After dinner Camp 4 became alive with bustle and activity. The horses were hitched onto the two big snow-ploughs; and, while one crew was sent to break out the main road from the yards to the landing, the other, under the immediate direction of Eustace him-



self, gave its attention to the oat road.

Vede Pelotte volunteered to look after Fred Warner's work, and as a result the cookee donned his snowshoes and accompanied Norman along the oat road. In a short time they overtook the big snow-plough, which, despite the eight horses attached to it, was not making very rapid progress.

"There are stretches," explained Billy Eustace, "where we get along fairly well; and then we run into drifts that make it slow work for us. It's going to be a big job at best, but I reckon we'll get there eventually."

"I think Fred and I will hurry on to the gummer's camp," said Norman. "I'm a little anxious to get another look at Kelty."

"And I'd rather enjoy getting a squint at him myself," confessed Eustace. "Reckon I'll go along with you. I guess the boys can manage to worry along without me for a spell."

With such companionship, and the sun shining brightly overhead, Norman found the return to the gummer's camp a far more cheerful journey than the one he had made from there with Sol Soc in the early hours of the morning.

As they came in sight of the rude log structure, they saw by the smoke pouring from the length of rusty stove pipe projecting above its roof, that it was occupied.

"Harry and Nate are settling down to housekeep-



ing," announced Eustace, with a laugh. "You can't lose them."

He swung open the rude door to the camp — then paused irresolutely upon the threshold, surprised at the scene which met his gaze.

A big fire burned in the stove. A dark form, strangely still, lay upon the bunk. Over it bent the scaler and Harry McMurray, busily at work chafing a man's hands and face with snow, a full pail of which sat near at hand upon the rude bench that served as a deacon seat.

Instinctively Eustace and the boys felt themselves in the presence of a tragedy. They entered the camp quietly, and closed the door softly behind them.

Mr. Collins looked up briefly from his work.

"I reckon he's going," he said. "He rolled off the bunk after Sol and Norman left him this morning, hitched along to the place where the axe leaned against the wall and cut the ropes, which bound his arms, against its edge. When he was free he put on his snow-shoes, shouldered the axe, and struck out across the lake in the very teeth of the storm."

Eustace gave a whistle of amazement.

"Yes, it was a foolhardy thing to do," conceded the scaler; "but he was desperate, and men in that mood take long chances."

"No man could cross this lake on foot at this point, in such a storm," commented McMurray. "There's a strong rake of wind out there even now."



"He knows," declared the scaler, "for he went out there and brought Kelty in."

"When did you find him?" asked Norman.

"Only a short time ago, since the storm went down. When the wind was blowing and driving the snow before it, we couldn't see any distance at all on the lake."

"Nate saw him out a full mile, half buried in the snow," explained McMurray. "I went after him. Nate went back to the camp and filled the stove with wood. Then he came out on the lake and helped me lug him in."

As they talked they continued their efforts to revive Kelty, and with some success. Presently he opened his eyes, and glanced wearily at the forms about him. A look of recognition came into his face as his glance rested upon Norman.

"I'm all in, pal," he whispered, weakly. "I'm sorry I turned against you. It's — my — temper. I was — lonesome. I meant — to — use you white; but you riled and upset me. Don't — lay — it — up" his voice died away in a hollow gasp.

The scaler bent above him for a moment; then slowly pulled the blanket over the set and silent features.

"He's gone," he said, in a low voice, "before the great Judge of judges."

Far up the oat road came the faint sound of harness-bells. The men were coming near. An hour later the members of the "breaking out" crew stood about the



little cabin hushed and silent under the strange spell which the presence of death among them never fails to exercise upon the rough men who fight the battles of civilization in the heart of the wilderness.



## CHAPTER XXX

### CONCLUSION

The day following Kelty's death his body was brought to Camp 4 on Vede Pelotte's tote-team, enclosed in a rude coffin hastily constructed by Ike Tapley. It was then shipped to Aerie Lake and buried in the cemetery at that place—all efforts to get into communication with relatives of the deceased having been unsuccessful. When the outlaw had thus passed finally out of its life, affairs at Camp 4 speedily resumed the even tenor of their way. One long, toilsome day succeeded another. The great "brow" of logs at the landing assumed mammoth proportions, as the big teams, urged to their utmost endeavors, piled upon it the fast dwindling accumulations of the yards.

With the first "breaking up" of the "going" in April the last loads were hauled. The Lakeland Lumber Company had secured its full "cut"; and bosses and men, conscious of having won the hearty approval of their employers by duty skilfully and successfully performed, relaxed in a general spirit of jollification. An atmosphere of fraternity and good-fellowship pervaded the camp. The rough friendships of the woods usually carry with them a strong undercurrent of





THE BIG TEAMS. — Page 390.







devotion and loyalty. Sentiment finds little expression among the hardy men of the woods crews; but it is none the less present, under the surface, in pure and generous quality.

The last night in camp Norman sat upon the deacon seat and played the banjo, while the men, in rollicking mood, danced a wild fandango up and down the camp floor. Even Harry McMurray and Billy Eustace, now that the need of the impalpable but none the less real dignity that hedges about a camp-boss was no longer felt, unbent sufficiently to give the festivities the benefit of their presence and approval.

The next morning, after a hearty breakfast, most of the members of the crew crowded upon the wagon-sleds, bade good-by to Camp 4, and took their departure for Gamewood siding, some to return to their families and others to spend their hard-earned money in reckless carousal during the period that would elapse before the beginning of the spring drives. The typical woodsman is apt to be an improvident fellow, and is often very slow to learn the lessons of experience.

Harry McMurray, Billy Eustace, Felix Lamarre, Fred Warner, Norman, and three teamsters remained behind another day to complete the inventory of the camp property and pack it for transportation to Gamewood siding by the teams retained for that purpose. Having completed their task, they took their departure the following morning for Camp No. 1.

"I've got a good job for you boys," announced Billy



Eustace, as he came upon Norman and Fred Warner that evening in the beaver house at Gamewood siding. "I've just received a letter offering me a foreman's position on the East Branch drive. I've made up my mind to accept it. Felix Lamarre has just agreed to go along with me as cook. I shall want Fred as his assistant and you for clerk."

"How about the Lakeland Lumber Company?" asked Norman, turning to Harry McMurray, who sat by the stove.

The walking boss turned toward him with one of his rare smiles.

"Our drive doesn't amount to much on these waters," he said. "Otherwise you may be sure I should hang onto Billy. With good luck I shall have all our logs out of Gerrish Brook in a fortnight after the ice goes out. After that it will be simply a matter of moving them along the chain of lakes to the mill with the company's towboat. If you want a good long service and lots of experience, I reckon you'd better go along with Billy to the East Branch waters."

"I'd like mighty well to go," said Norman, with enthusiasm, "but I don't know what father will say about it. Will it be time enough if I wire you after I get home?" he asked, turning to Eustace.

"Yes. I reckon I can hold it open for you at least a month or so if the present weather holds."

That night Norman fell asleep revolving plans for a spring's experience on the drive. He had seen one



part of the process of converting the resources of the big forests to the uses of civilization, and he was eager to follow it through to the end.

There was a lump in his throat when he bade good-by to Fred Warner and the others the next morning, and took the train for Aerie Lake, where he had agreed to spend a day as the guest of Mr. Seavey. All of them had become very dear to him in his winter's association with them, and he had come to know and appreciate their many sterling qualities.

Arriving at the little village of Aerie Lake, he found Miss Margie awaiting him with a horse and sleigh at the station.

"Father was detained at the mill," she said, demurely, as she greeted him with unaffected cordiality, "so I came to meet you in his place. We didn't want to take any chance of your getting lost in the great city."

Norman glanced with a smile at the few stores and houses grouped about the big sawmill that stood on the lake shore and obviously constituted the center of local industry.

"You are very kind," he said.

"I had another reason," she confessed. "I've promised an old friend of yours, in whom I have become much interested during the past few weeks, to bring you to him as soon as I could after your arrival here."

"Jim Benner?" asked Norman.



"I shall begin to grow afraid of you if you show such powers of divination," laughed Miss Margie.

"How is he getting on?"

"Nicely. The doctor says if he continues to improve in the next fortnight as rapidly as he has in the past week or so, he'll have him home by the end of that time."

Norman seated himself in the sleigh beside his fair hostess, and, a moment later, was spinning up the village street. He was much surprised, when they drew up in front of the hospital, to note its generous size and architectural beauty.

"I doubt if you expected to find such an institution up here in the woods," said Miss Margie, with an accent of pride, following his glance. "I can assure you that its appointments are thoroughly modern."

"It is certainly a credit to the community," returned Norman, admiringly.

"We owe it all to good Father Boulette," explained Miss Margie. "It has been a labor of love with him. The mill-owners helped with building material, and he personally solicited the funds necessary for its construction. He has visited all the camps in this section for several years past, and a large part of the money expended here has come to him in one and two-dollar subscriptions."

"It will be a monument to his memory after he is gone," said Norman.

"So it will," admitted Miss Margie; "but I am sure



he has never thought of it in that light. He has looked only to the good it would do for those in sickness and need."

While they talked Norman had blanketed the horse and hitched him to one of the posts in front of the hospital.

"We'd like to see Mr. Benner, please," said Miss Margie to the sister who opened the door in response to their ring.

They were shown up-stairs, and down a long corridor, to a small room in the rear of the building.

Jim Benner, muffled in a warm blanket and looking thin and pale, sat in a big rocking-chair beside a clean white bed.

"See whom I've brought you, Mr. Benner," said Miss Margie, as they entered the room.

"Norman Carver, sure es preachin'!" exclaimed Benner, joyfully, extending a thin hand. "I'm right glad t' see ye, my boy."

"And I'm mighty glad to see you, Jim," said Norman, heartily, taking the proffered hand. "You've certainly had a long, hard siege of it, but they tell me you are coming now."

"It's hard killin' a feller like me," rejoined Benner; "but if I hadn't 'a' ben pretty tough thet rascal would sartin sure 'a' done it!"

"A miss is as good as a mile," said Norman.

"Two or three on 'em, if it's a miss like thet one," said Benner, with a nod toward Margie.



"You're an old flatterer!" responded the young lady, with a rosy face. "How did you come here?" she asked, with an evident desire to change the subject. "The last time I saw you I think you were in the ward."

"So I was," said Benner. "But arter I got t' gainin' I told th' father I'd got t' hev a smoke or die. He didn't want me t' die, so he hed me moved in here. Sit down! Sit down, both on ye," he insisted, hospitably. "I want a good long chat with ye," he continued, when they had acted upon his invitation. "I want t' know every blessed thing es happened arter I left camp."

Thus admonished, Norman related at some length the events that had occurred at Camp 4 after Benner's removal to the hospital. Miss Margie, seated near, was a most interested listener to the narrative.

"So thet hell-bird hes got through, hes he?" asked Benner, as Norman finished his story. "Wal, it was lucky for him thet he got a chance to die a nat'ral death. I never expected thet he would."

"It was better that way," returned Norman.

"Mebbe so; mebbe so," responded the old man, doubtfully. "I shall always remember, though, the fiendish look on his face when I twitted 'im with bein' Ben Fargo, 'n' told 'im es how I hed a paper tellin' all erbout th' goin's on o' one Clouter Kelty. I reckon he'd 'a' jumped on me then 'n' thar if Sol hadn't 'a' ben t' work on th' landin' with me. He stole on me



later like a reg'lar hyena, 'n' th' fust I knew he was nigh was when I turned round t' leave my work 'n' got this clip on my head. Oh, he meant t' do me, sartin sure, 'n' he would, too, if I hadn't 'a' ben uncommon tough. Wal, good-by, 'n' good luck," he added, as Norman and Margie rose to go. "Old Jim will allus hev a warm corner in his heart for ye, my boy. When ye git round t' work in double harness ye can't do better 'n to come t' Aerie Lake," he added, with a twinkle in his eye, whereat Miss Margie, blushing furiously, shot him a reproachful look, and hastily left the room.

Norman lingered behind for a last word with Benner.

"I don't know but that you're right, Jim," he said, with a smile. "Good-by."

"Good-by, my boy. God bless you," was the husky response.

On the drive from the hospital to Mr. Seavey's cottage on the lake shore, Miss Margie was somewhat reserved and silent; but, under the spell of her father's presence at dinner, the embarrassing incident of the morning was forgotten, and before the meal was over she was chatting with her accustomed spirit and vivacity.

That afternoon Norman accompanied Mr. Seavey to the big mill. At the foot of the slip, up which the logs were drawn on an endless chain from the lake to the mill, was a small pond enclosed with heavy plank piling, which was kept free from ice by means of the



exhaust steam from the big boilers. Here logs were dumped, as they were needed to keep the big mill in operation, from the mammoth piles stored on the lake shore the previous fall, and by farmers who hauled them directly from the stump.

Norman looked on in wonder as the giant rotaries converted these former monarchs of the forest into the long and short lumber of commerce. He was amazed, too, at the ease with which the power carriers distributed it to the various parts of the mill as it came from the saws.

That evening he enjoyed a pleasant chat with Mr. Seavey and his daughter before the big open fire in the sitting-room of their cottage. Early the next morning he took the train for Boston, where he arrived in due season, to receive a most hearty welcome from his father. He was successful, after some persuasion, in securing the General's consent to his going on the drive with Billy Eustace; but what befell him there will properly form the subject-matter of another volume, entitled: "WITH PICKPOLE AND PEAVEY; OR, TWO LIVE BOYS ON THE EAST BRANCH DRIVE."



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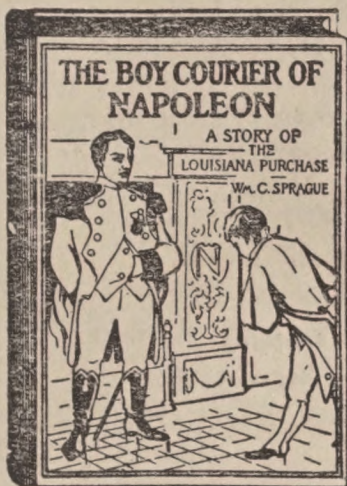
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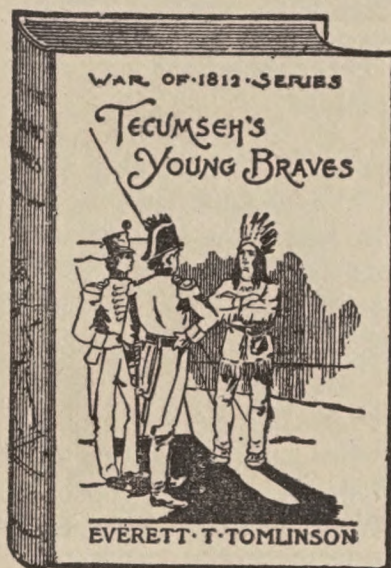
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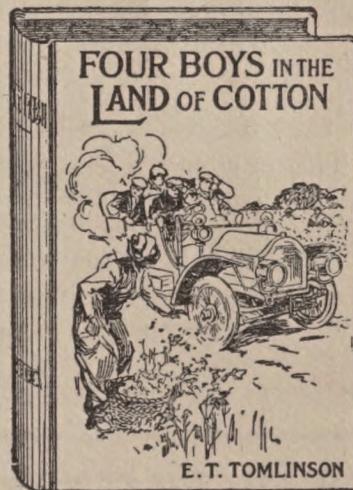
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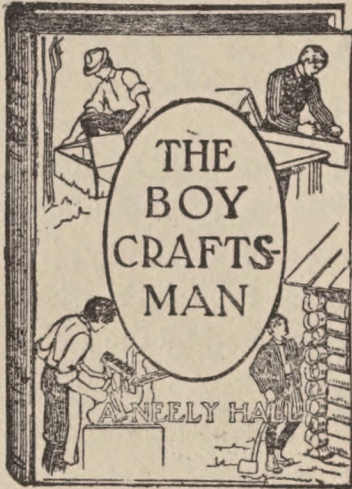
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